



CANENERO

# Canenero

translated by Wolfi  
Landstreicher

Canenero  
selections from the Italian anarchist paper,  
translated by Wolfi Landstreicher

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## Introduction

*Canenero* was a weekly anarchist publication that came out in Italy between the end of 1994 and the beginning of 1997 with one break. This was when the Marini investigation against anarchists began to bear its rotten fruit in an attempt to imprison dozens of anarchists on charges of “subversive association” or membership in an “armed gang”. One of the ideas behind *Canenero* was to provide a means for ongoing communication and discussion in the face of this repressive operation of the state. A substantial portion of the material in the paper dealt with the situation and the various anarchist responses to it.

But the editors of *Canenero* were not willing to allow the repressive activity of the state to define the limits of the discussion in the paper they published, so along with information and analysis of that specific situation other significant questions and idea were raised in its pages. Thus, within its pages one could find pointed, but brief, theoretical articles, social and historical analyses and bitingly witty looks at the week's news.

Of course, as is appropriate for a weekly publication, most of the articles are specific to the time they were written, intended for immediate use in the heat of the situation that was going on. But



there were enough articles of more general interest that I considered it worth my while to translate a number of them for publication in book form. I have collected the articles that I find particularly stimulating. I am certainly not in agreement with every word here. But everything here has deepened my own thinking on the questions raised. If, for example, Mario Cacciucco's description of relationships between people as that of "spheres that bounce off of each other" and his consequent rejection of the very idea of love and friendship seem rather bleak to me, this is precisely why his article provokes me to examine the nature of everyday relationships more closely, particularly those that we call "loving" and "friendly." In fact, one of the things that stands out for me in these articles is the way they raise such significant questions—often about matters that we take for granted—in so few words.

I have chosen to publish the material in approximately chronological order.<sup>1</sup> The first article was an introduction to the project and the last was the editors' explanation for bringing the project to a close. In this last piece, the problems that confront any anarchist publishing project are made clear. As an anarchist, one hopes not to publish just

1 Since I have lost my original copies of *Canenero*, I can't check to verify that everything is in order, but it is close.

in order to have something to do. There has to be a purpose that relates to our broader life project of revolt. If we don't want to be leaders or evangelists carrying a supposed revolutionary gospel to whatever imaginary "masses", then it seems to me that the idea of developing relationships of affinity and complicity in which significant discussion plays a central part would be a primary reason for publishing. Without this, publishing seems to be a meaningless spewing forth of words playing into the degradation of language that this society imposes through its own one-way "communication." And real discussion is not a mere taking of positions and defending them from the fortress of our various ideologies. It has to be real encounters between various and conflicting ideas.

If, ultimately, the editors of *Canenero* did not feel that it stimulated the sort of discussion they desired, it is my hope that in publishing these articles in English, discussions may be stimulated here. There is a lot to think about in these brief writings. Perhaps they will stir something up.

*Wolfi Landstreicher*  
*February 2006*



## VAGABOND DESTRUCTION

*Canenero.*

One word alongside another. A sound that is lost in the continuous deafening noise that they still call language. A word different from others. A hiss in the midst of shouts. A sigh from which to move in search of new meanings in a world where everything has been *said*.

A word *against* others, an *against* that is other with respect to words, that doesn't inhabit the space of the opposition between concepts, but that of the silence that precedes and accompanies it.

A word, finally, that doesn't refer to itself, but that causes us to sense that region in which grow—in the silence where thought can move freely—the meaning of our singularity and the desire for revolt against all that suffocates it.

A paper for all those who, in this civilization of collective identity and reciprocal belonging, want to affirm their nature as “strangers everywhere,” as refractories against every fatherland (the “entire world” included).

**Vagabond** like the thought of the cynics, the Greek philosophers who in their scorn toward the regal condition of a philosophy addressed to power symbolized themselves with the image of the dog (*Kýon*, in Greek), as a sign of refusal of hierarchy, social obligation, and the supposed necessity for laws. Repaid, as is fitting for all free spirits, with censure and mystification. In our language—that is passed off as neutral but cannot hide its christian nature—“cynicism” has become synonymous with voluptuous indifference to the suffering of others. Thus, the police of ideas which travel through the centuries underground has gotten rid of what utterly did not give a damn for gods or laws.

So that the desire to be outside does not become resigned mutilation, but arms itself against every form of authority and exploitation.

So that one passes from the Power of dialogue (with which one thinks everything can be resolved) and from the dialogue of Power (which invites everyone to reasonable negotiation) to a feeling of radical hostility toward the existent, to the destruction of every structure that alienates, exploits, programs, and regiments the lives of individuals. The black of the dog (this animal that is generally associated with the idea of submission, of servile meekness) is precisely the desire to come out from the herd of voluntary servitude and open to the joy of

rebellion. Not the black in which all cows are equal (even if it is in their being *against* or *outside*), but rather the black in which the boundaries between destruction and creation, between extreme defense of oneself and the construction of relationships of mutuality with others, disappear.

A paper—to piece together a mosaic of thousands of possible meanings—of vagabond destruction, meaning by this the possibility of passing to the attack against state and domination in all its manifestations without pledging allegiance (to use a well-known expression) to any flag or organization.

As individuals, always, even where the unshakable desire for the other leads us to choose the path of union.

## THE BODY AND REVOLT

**Massimo Passamani**

The entire history of western civilization can be read as a systematic attempt to exclude and isolate the body. From Plato on, the body has been seen at various times as a folly to control, an impulse to repress, labor power to arrange, or an unconsciousness to psychoanalyze.

The platonic separation between the body and the mind, a separation carried out to the complete advantage of the latter (“the body is the tomb of the mind”), even accompanies the seemingly most radical expressions of thought.

Now, this thesis is supported in numerous philosophy texts (almost all, except those that are alien to the rarefied and unwholesome atmosphere of the universities). A reading of Nietzsche and of authors like Hannah Arendt has found its appropriate scholastic systematization (phenomenological psychology, idea of difference, and a way of pigeonholing). Nonetheless, or actually because of this, it does not seem to me that this problem, the implications of which are many and fascinating, has been considered in depth.

A profound liberation of individuals entails an equally profound transformation of the way of

conceiving the body, its expression, and its relations.

Due to a battle-trained christian heritage, we are led to believe that domination controls and expropriates a part of the human being without damaging her inner being (and there is much that could be said about the division between a presumed inner being and external relationships). Of course, capitalist relationships and state impositions adulterate and pollute life, but we think that our perceptions of ourselves and of the world remain unaltered. So even when we imagine a radical break with the existent, we are sure that it is our body as we presently think of it that will act on this.

I think instead that our body has suffered and continues to suffer a terrible mutilation. And this is not only due to the obvious aspects of control and alienation determined by technology. (That bodies have been reduced to reservoirs of spare organs is clearly shown by the triumph of the science of transplants, which is described with an insidious euphemism as a “frontier of medicine.” But to me the reality seems much worse than pharmaceutical speculations and the dictatorship of medicine as a separate and powerful body reveals.) The food we eat, the air we breathe, and our daily relations have atrophied our senses. The senselessness of work, forced sociality, and the dreadful materiality of chit-chat regiment both mind and body, since



no separation is possible between them.

The docile observance of the law—the imprisoning channels into which desires, which such captivity really transforms into sad ghosts of themselves, are enclosed—weakens the organism just as much as pollution or forced medication.

“Morality is exhaustion,” said Nietzsche.

To affirm one’s own life, the exuberance that demands to be given, entails a transformation of senses no less than of ideas and relationships.

I have frequently come to see people as beautiful, even physically, who had seemed almost insignificant to me even a short time earlier. When you are projecting your life and test yourself in possible revolt with someone, you see in your playmates beautiful individuals, and not the sad faces and bodies that extinguish their light in habit and coercion. I believe that they really are becoming beautiful (and not that I simply see them as such) in the moment in which they express their desires and live their ideas.

The ethical resoluteness of one who abandons and attacks the power structures is a perception, a moment in which one tastes the beauty of one’s comrades and the misery of obligation and submission. “I rebel, therefore I am” is a phrase from Camus that never ceases to charm me as only a reason for life can do.

In the face of a world that presents ethics as the space of authority and law, I think that there is no ethical dimension except in revolt, in risk, in the dream. The survival in which we are confined is unjust because it brutalizes and uglifies.

Only a different body can realize that further view of the life that opens to desire and mutuality, and only an effort toward beauty and toward the unknown can free our fettered bodies.

## THE TECHNIQUE OF CERTAINTY

Marco Beaco

*I was frightened to find myself in the void,  
I myself a void.*

*I felt like I was suffocating, considering and  
feeling that everything is void, solid void.*

—Giacomo Leopardi

The metaphor of “mental illness” dispossesses the individual of whatever is most unique and personal in her way of life, in his method of perceiving reality and herself in it; this is one of the most dangerous attacks against the singular, because through it the individual is always brought back to the social, the collective, the only “healthy” dimension in existence.

The behavioral norms that regulate the human mass become absolute, the “deviant” act that follows a different logic is tolerated only when stripped of its peculiar “meaning,” of the particular “rationality” that underlies it. Reasons connect only to collective acts, which can be brought back—if not to the codes of the dominant culture then to those of various ethnic, antagonist and criminal subcultures that exist. The sharing of meanings, symbols, and interpretations of reality thus appears as the best antidote to madness.

Thus if one who suddenly kills his family is a

lunatic, or better, a “monster,” one who sets fire to a refuge for foreigners appears as a xenophobe (at most—from the method—a bit hasty, but still within reason) and one who slaughters in the situation of a declared war is nothing but a “good soldier.”

Thus, according to the classifying generalization that makes them all alike, expropriating them of their lived singularity, lunatics are “dangerous to society.” Truthfully, one can only agree with this, certainly not because of the supposed and pretextual aggressiveness and violence attributed to those who suffer psychiatric diagnosis (the psychiatrists and educators of every sort are undoubtedly much more dangerous), but because they have violated, knowingly or not, the essentially quantitative codes that constitute normality. What is surprising is that, after long years of domestication, there is anybody who does not respond to cultural stimuli—if not quite automatically, at least in a highly predictable manner. Unpredictability is the source of the greatest anxiety for every society and its guardians, since it is often the quality of the individual; no motive, no value, no purpose that is socially comprehensible, only an individual logic, necessarily abnormal.

Defense from this danger is entrusted to the proclamations of science. In other words, the “unhealthy” gesture, the creator of which is not responsible, remains as a consequence of an external mis-

fortune that could strike and give rise to thousands of people like him. The mechanism is therefore well contrived; a gesture deprived of meaning, of an underlying will, becomes innocuous, and it is easy to neutralize it, along with its creator, behind the alibi of the cure, which is “social” as well.

The psychiatric diagnosis comes down on the individual like an axe, amputating her language, his meaning, her life paths; it claims to eliminate them as irrational, senseless; the psychiatrist behaves before them with the liquidating attitude of one who transforms the experiences of life into malfunctions of the psyche, emotions into malignant tumors to be removed.

Psychiatrists—as technicians of certainty—are the most efficient police of the social order. Reality, like the meaning of existence, has clear and unequivocal boundaries for these priests in white shirts; their mission: to “return to their senses” those who have gotten lost venturing onto the winding paths of nonsense.

If the police are limited, as is claimed, to beating you, the psychiatrist demands to hear you say, “Thank you, I am well now,” as well.

The focal point in the discussion is not in the four walls and the bars of the asylum, nor in the electroshock and constraint beds, nor in bad as opposed to good psychiatry, but in “psychiatric

thought” itself, in the form of thinking of anyone addressing different subjects with the clinical eye of diagnosis, always looking for the symptoms of a pathology in them, in order to annul the difference with a “therapy” that brings them back to being more like us.

If the real purpose of the “new places” of psychiatry was to stimulate creativity, individual growth, to liberate communication, and develop the capacity for relations, they would not be “psychiatric” or “therapeutic/rehabilitative” places, but probably ideal places for everyone, places of freedom. The problem is that these places are nothing but ghettos where one does not find individuals interacting on the level of mutuality, but rather two “categories” of persons in asymmetrical positions: the professionals and the clients, the healthy and the diseased, those who help and those who are helped; in these places, the healthy try to persuade the diseased that what they did and thought up to that time was wrong (or rather “unhealthy”) and to lead them, through the “joyful” method of the encounter group, of dance, theatre, and music... toward the binaries of normality.

The “autonomy” and “self-realization” about which these democratic operators flap their tongues are exclusively their own and it is necessary to conform to them in order to be able to

leave the healing enclosure. Psychiatric medicine itself, as analgesic (anesthetic) for the mind, is the sign of the attempt to block every development, every pathway however painful at times, that an individual puts into action as a reaction to what oppresses her. Without mystifying this process, this moment of “crisis,” that is not necessarily a pathway to liberation, the fact of the matter remains that the answer of power is generalized narcosis, collective stupefaction, that renders us static and tranquil, anchored to our placid misery.

## THE OBSCURE CLARITY OF WORDS

Alfredo M. Bonanno

One who writes, perhaps even more than one who speaks, is called to clarify, to bring light. A problem is posed—the problem of something the one who writes should be concerned with (since otherwise his respect would be deprived of meaning). This problem is illuminated by the use of words, by a specific use, capable of being organized within the shell of certain rules and in view of a perspective to be attained.

One who reads, perhaps even more than one who listens, does not catch the individual words but their meaning within the sphere of the rules that organize them and the perspective that they affirm they desire to reach.

However weak the meaning of what one writes (or says) might be, the one who reads (or listens) does not carry out the role of passive receiver. The relationship often takes on the appearance of conflict, within which two different universes clash with each other. But this clash is not based on any active intention on the part of the one writing (or speaking), and a passive one on the part of the one hearing (or reading). The two movements are contrary only in appearance. The reader participates in



the effort of the writer and the writer in that of the reader. Even if the two movements are separated from each other, they are not so in the fact, which has not been much considered, that the one who writes is always (simultaneously) a reader of the text she is writing, and the one who reads is also himself (simultaneously) the writer of the text that he is reading.

Here two errors are committed. The first is that in which one encounters the writer who thinks that by reading while he writes, he understands what she is writing, and doesn't realize that often her comprehension is not due to the clarity of the text, but to the reader-writer connection that reaches the highest level in the precise act of organizing words according to a project. The second is that which happens to the reader who, imagining himself in the act of writing the text that he is reading, refuses to accept word choices that are unthinkable to her, and doesn't realize that often the incomprehensibility of the text that she reads is not so much due to a lack of clarity as to the fact that he would have written it differently.

The thing that seems to escape this binary relationship is the third element, i.e., the topic that is being discussed. The reality examined with words is a barrier that, on the one hand, may help to organize the words in a certain way (accepting some

and rejecting others), but, on the other hand, carries out a distorting process with regards to the employment of the accepted words. No word is neutral, but each one, being organized within concepts, contributes to transferring to the reader (and in still different ways, to the listener) a conception of the diffraction of the reality examined (of which one writes or speaks).

Thus, no word is clear or obscure as such; there is no possibility of definitively casting a pool of light on reality, clarifying it once and for all. Once the word is detached from the reality to which it refers and thus from the choice that the writer (or speaker) made on the basis of the suggestions of the reality examined, it no longer means anything. It vanishes, and its possibility for being anything, a means for thought or action, an element for uniting or dividing human beings, vanishes with it. The dictionary is like a warehouse of words. They are lined up there on the shelves, some used continuously, others only rarely, all equally available, but only a few of them able to be coordinated together according to the intentions of the one who chooses and the suggestions of the reality she wants to dress up in words.

It's just that we can understand words—and thus decide if each of them is “clear” for us—on the condition of being conversant with this op-

eration of dressing up. There are not words on one side: dead objects shut up in dictionaries, and reality on the other side, where individual objects exist beside words that are also themselves objects, but all in a haphazard manner, without relationship. Flows of meaning exist, i.e., working procedures in the course of which the elements of reality (that here, for convenience, we can call “objects”) receive meaning through us, putting on linguistic clothes. There is no chair separate from the word that means it, and the different words to which different languages have recourse reconfirm this endeavor as a flow of meaning, proposing philological nuances that through the history of the millennia often cause incredible routes, extraordinary adventures, to emerge.

Dressing reality is thus the primary activity of the human being, the condition for acting and itself an action, the essential form of action, insofar as thought itself is the process of clothing reality (a fact that is not much considered). What could we “do” without the capacity of “reading” reality. We would find ourselves before a dark mass of foreboding and fear. The most important question is not that of the greatest clarity (easiest words, dressed most modestly, linearity in the correspondences), but rather, and maybe contrarily, that of the greatest richness (different words contrasting the common-

places, dressed in the liveliest colors, uncertainty of correspondence). The word is also enchantment, marvel, joyous invention, fancy, evocation of something other, not the seal of the already seen, the confirmation of one's certainties.

The aim of speaking and writing is therefore not that of "clarifying," but of "enriching" reality, of inviting the unexpected, the unpredictable. The one who communicates has no obligation to give us prescriptions for repair, panaceas for our fears, confirmations of our knowledge, can even feel free to suggest difficult routes, to make uncertainty and danger flare.

And whoever wants to feel safe in his house is free to stop his reading or cover her ears.

## THE LOGIC OF MEASURE

Massimo Passamani

*Many are the things that cannot be measured  
but nothing is more immeasurable than man.*

—Sophocles

The meaning of measure. It is an enclosure that is simultaneously a dispute with and management of life, a prison that poses the existence of people *equal to zero*.

And yet, as Protagoras said, the human being is the measure of all things. His intelligence is the place in which they are linked together. If the human being herself is this measure, this threshold, it means that he has no place and that her home is *atopia*.

A measure to impose, and the punishment for those who arrogantly go beyond it, only has meaning if it provides a boundary—a homeland—to human life. And this homeland is nothing more than the designation of a space built around the limits in which one tries to constrain that which is particularly unlimited: singularity.

But it is really the place of the limit to create *trans-gression*, and to justify itself as limit through punishment.

*Errare divinum est* (To err is divine), said Savinio. Only when we pose the measure of individuals as something that transcends them do crime and punishment have a foundation. “To err” pertains to the gods. If their empire, their *measure*, falls, the limits created in their image and likeness fall as well. The human being cannot help but go beyond the limits, since he himself is the limit, the boundless threshold. Furthermore, only in this hubris, in this arrogance, is her possibility for affirming herself-as-individual to be found.

As Holderlin understood with regards to Sophocles’ Oedipus, the human being questions and lives “immeasurably.” Relegating his individuality to the place of law, aberrations will always occur, because *ab-errare* [“in wandering” as well as “in error”—*translator*] is where one’s individuality has its place. To the extent that the individual is her own measure, she succeeds in not sacrificing her *atopia*, in being rooted in the absence of place.

This absence of place is an utter absurdity for philosophy. And this is why its words have always advised moderation, the truth that stands in the middle. But that middle makes the human being into a puppet of god (and of every authority), a result of hubris and power, a mistake that poses a remedy.

The measure is god’s, the state’s, society’s. All

attempts to harmonize, to tolerate difference, refer to a limit that is always collective. Whether this boundary is the one and indisputable truth or the multiplicity of truths is of little importance. If the truths are constrained to compose a social ensemble of which they end up *being a part*, there is no space for singularity, but only for different appraisals with respect to the techniques to preserve these walls that one could not want to destroy. Each *in her own way* can only be a slave. The ensemble of society—the meaning of measure—is what one need not take into account, “except as the object of destruction.”

The uniqueness of each of us cannot be an element of something else because difference is itself the common space. The only place for difference is the absence of place. Individuality must defend its difference and want the difference of others to exist as well. My difference is revealed because that of others exists.

Power, on the contrary, is the foundation of a territory of identity and measurement, a territory from which it is impossible to escape without destroying the community of those who have been made equal to zero (that Michelstaedter called the “wicked clique”) and building the common difference.

I think that affirming one’s singularity is the

exact opposite of the defensive armoring of oneself, that prison-like enclosure from which (as the skeptical “reaction” to the religion of the common good and sacrifice would have it) to control the world with the disenchantment of doubt. Difference is not a slit through which to spy on the movements of the other, afraid that she might go too far in making his way and thus could disturb our tranquility. There isn’t any kitchen garden to cultivate as Voltaire believed. Distrust, the fear of the other that makes us move away suddenly when we touch a strange body, is an ivory tower under siege. The immeasurable dimension in which it is possible to live together without domination and abuse, and so also without their double, Harmony, can “settle” in no one place.

Singularity has no homeland because the homeland is power.

The individual in revolt is a “restless place between the night and the light,” between destruction and creation. And more. The light itself is darkness, since Phanes “sits inside, in the sanctuary of the night.” But not even the liquidation of the dialectic that always transforms the negative into the positive, annihilating it, is capable of becoming a certainty. If we were to look for the measure, the one of being *against* or *outside*, in the sanctuary of the night, we would end up becoming evangelists of demolition,



pensioners of revolt.

In its endless skirmishes, the Logic seems unshakable. And yet its rigid form cannot resist anyone who wants to live without measure.

Once again, more than a project, it is a question of knowing how to live.

## THE REVERSE ROAD

**Alfredo M. Bonanno**

Times of doubt and uncertainty have arrived. New and old fears spur the search for guarantees. In the market where human affairs are managed, new models of comfort are briskly haggled over. Madonnas weep, politicians make promises; everywhere war and misery, savagery and horror are rife, rendering us now unable to even feel outrage, let alone to rebel.

People have been quick to accustom themselves to blood. They scarcely smell the odor of the massacres, and every day something new and more incredible awaits them: Tokyo, Gaza, the changeless Bosnia, Burundi, and still more places, remote, distant, and yet nearby. What they ask is to be left out of it. Being informed, even of the smallest household massacres, those of Saturday evening for example, which pattern dozens of deaths weekly, with no other purpose than that of knowing in order to forget.

In a world that is revealed to be increasingly weak in real meanings, in motivations that give content to life, in projects worthy of being lived, people give away freedom for specters that are in easy reach, specters that come out from the studios

of power. Religion is one of these specters. Not any religion whatsoever, objectified in distant and crusty practices, governed by priests and simulations lacking sense, but a religion that can reach the emptiness of their minds, filling it with the future—that is, with hope.

I know well that a religion of this sort does not exist, but there are many people who try hard to exploit the need that exists for it. Against this need, the rationalist claims made by Cartesian veterans (of the victories through which they have conquered and destroyed the world) are worthless. Their chatter of scientific certainty no longer charms anyone. No one, except for a small group of relentless intellectuals, is willing to believe in the capacity of science to solve all the problems of humanity, to give an answer to all the questions concerning the eternal fear of the unknown.

Now it occurs that even we anarchists allow ourselves to take on this extraordinary laceration, to which we should instead remain extraneous if we want to find a path for action, a path capable of making us understand reality, and thus putting us in a position to transform it. Even we don't quite know what to do.

On the one hand, we withdraw, horrified, in the face of always delirious and disgusting manifestations of faith in all its forms. Sometimes we have

pity for the man that stoops, that suffers under pain, and thus accepts the image of the incredible specter and hopes, and continues to suffer and hope. But we can have no more than this for him. Immediately afterwards, contempt takes over, and with contempt, refusal, distancing, rejection.

On the other hand, still looking carefully, what do we find? We find an equally contemptible misery, but one that knows how to dress itself well, with the garments of culture and fine speech. This latter misery believes in science and in the world that can be systematized, in the world that is moving toward its highest destinies. But it closes its eyes and covers its ears, waiting for the storm to die down, unconscious and pitiless in the face of the pain and misery of the rest of the world. This universe of specialists and respectable people also disgusts us, in many ways as much as or more than the other, that at least had ignorance and the passionate force of emotion on its side.

But us, what do we do? We don't beat our chests, nor do we go around with a slide-rule in our pockets. We believe neither in god nor in science. Neither miracle workers nor wise men in white coats interest us. But are we then really beyond all this?

I don't think so. Merely reflecting, we realize that we are still children of our times. But, being

anarchists, we are so in a reversed manner. We naively think that it is enough to turn the errors of others inside out like a glove in order to have the beautiful truth dished out in shovelfuls. It isn't so.

Therefore, refusing that of the obscure that exists in the times in which we live, we set our feet on the certainties of a different science, indeed, a science that we must build completely ourselves, from top to bottom, but that like the other one will be based on reason and will. And, at the same time, refusing what there is of the functional and utilitarian in science, we go in search of sensations and emotions, intuitions and desires from which we expect answers for all questions, answers that cannot come to the extent that these stimuli crumble in our excessively rough hands.

Thus, we reel, now in one direction, now in another. We don't have the ideological certainties of a few decades ago, but the critiques we have developed are still not able to tell us with the least bit of trustworthiness what to do. Thinking that we are in a position to act beyond every value, every foundation, in the moment that we ask ourselves what to do, we don't know how to give ourselves a certain answer.

In other times, we had less fear of ridicule, we were more obtuse in our stubborn and coherent doing, less worried about matters of style. I

fear that we are too much in love with subtleties, with nuances. Continuing along this path, we might even lose the meaning of the whole that has never been lacking, the projectual sense that made us feel rooted in reality, part of something in the course of transformation, not mere monads, brilliant in our own light, but dark to each other.

## CHILDREN'S THOUGHTS

**Massimo Passamani**

Yes, I know, we are all against axioms, guarantees, certainties.

But can we really live without sharing our being-against—without depending upon this sharing?

The search for identity is not always oriented toward the mass, toward the great crowds of followers. Even the small group can become our safe space. What's more, the very refusal of every group and of any form of membership can construct its own arrogant, solitary radicality through the play of recognition.

My stubborn solitude is fed by what it opposes; it even—or maybe, above all—feeds on criticisms.

To appear to be against someone or something that seems to assume the features of authority—a charismatic person, a common truth—is not always an act of revolt. Its origins could be, for example, the desire to receive part of the light of what one challenges by taking the role of challenger. As if saying: I beg you to notice that I have no leaders.

I believe that the reality of not being esteemed

(which is to say valued and measured)—even in the form of a certain hostility—by a group has greater significance in the renunciation of revolt than repression. And there is no resigned desistence that does not degenerate into resentment, quick to assemble in new, spiteful herds.

Two or three words, the same ones, repeated in some meeting, and there they are joining the discussion that unfailingly ensues, in hope that other words—two or three—will replace them.

All right, it is as you say, I am going too far. But doesn't it seem to you that this all consolidates the group and calcifies thought?

Starting from myself, what is said to me always seems so imprecise and reassuring, that hearing it continually repeated is frankly too much.

Deepening relations of affinity would have to mean making difference emerge. (Otherwise, on what do we base affinity?) And yet one doesn't escape homogeneity (the fact that some anarchists use this word in a positive sense makes my head spin) by refusing conferences, membership cards, and other blatantly formal fixations.

The mechanisms—I hesitate to say rhythms, but perhaps they really are rhythms—, the rhythms, then, of participation and compromise stress our lives well beyond measure. Thinking for ourselves,



as Lessing expressed it, is never the outcome.

What would the desire to rebuild be if it never leads us to destruction? What would it be if it anchored us to the role of destroyer?

Gottfried Benn said that the one who loves ruins also loves statues. And with regard to statues, Benn, it was understood.

Perhaps it is anxiety about the future that transforms individuals into puppets of a group. A life considering needs a solid basis. Obedience and calculation live under the sign of an eternal tomorrow.

But aren't ideas—coagulants of language—giving us the awareness of time?

Thought is born only when desire grows pale. Living the moment, the immediacy of existence, completely, does one have no future, does one have no time—does one have no ideas?

If all values collapse (is it possible?), only “because it pleases me, that's why” remains.

So many acrobatics to discover what children have always known.

The relation of mutuality—in no way a moral good, in no way a duty—is maybe really a relationship between children.

## STREAMLINED PRODUCTION

**Alfredo M. Bonanno**

Among the various characteristics of the last several years, the failure of global automation in the factories (understood in the strict sense) must be pointed out, a failure caused by the failure of the prospects and, if you will, the dreams of mass production.

The meeting between telematics and traditional fixed production (harsh assembly lines that were later automated up to a certain point with the introduction of robots) has not developed toward perfecting the lines of automation. This is due not to technical problems, but to economic ones and to the market. The threshold of saturation for technologies that can replace manual labor has not been exceeded; on the contrary there are always new possibilities opening in this direction. Rather, the strategies of mass production have been surpassed, and thus now have little importance for the economic model of maximum profit.

The flexibility that the telematic guaranteed and has steadily made possible in the rise of post-industrial transformation, at a certain point caused such profound changes in the order of the market, and thus of the demand, as to render the open-

ing that the telematic itself had made possible—or rather put within reach—useless. Thus, the flexibility and ease of production is moved from the sphere of the factory into the sphere of the market, causing a standstill in the telematic development of automation, and a reflowering of new prospects for an extremely diversified demand that was unthinkable until a few years ago.

If one reads the shareholders' reports of some of the largest industries, it becomes clear that automation is only sustainable at increasing costs that quickly become anti-economical. Only the prospect of social disorder of a great intensity could still drive the financially burdensome path of global automation.

For this reason, the reduction of the costs of production is now entrusted not only to the cost of labor, as has occurred in the past several years (a consequence of massive telematic replacement), but also to a rational management of so-called productive redundancy. In short, a ruthless analysis of waste, from whatever point of view, and first of all from the perspective of production times. In this way, by a variety of means, productive pressure is exercised once again on the producer in flesh and blood, dismantling the ideology of containment (on the basis of which an easing of the conditions of suffering and exploitation that have always

been characteristic of wage labor was credited to telematic technology).

The reduction of waste thus becomes the new aim of streamlined production, in its time based on the flexibility of labor already consolidated and the productive potentiality guaranteed by the telematic coupling as its starting point. And this reduction of waste falls entirely on the back of the producer. In fact, the mathematical analysis realized through complex systems already in widespread use in the major industries can easily solve the technical problems of contractors, which is to say, those relative to the combination of raw materials and machinery, in view of maintenance. But the solution to these problems would remain marginal to production as a whole if the use of production time were not also placed under a regime of control.

Thus, the old taylorism comes back into fashion, though now it is filtered through the new psychological and computing technologies. The comprehensive flexibility of large industry is based on a sectoral flexibility of various components, as well as on the flexibility of the small manufacturers that peripherally support the productive unity of command. Work time is thus the basic unity for the new production; its control, without waste but also without stupidly repressive irritations, remains the indispensable connection between the old and new

productive models.

These new forms of control have a pervasive nature. In other words, they tend to penetrate into the mentality of the individual producer, to create general psychological conditions so that little by little external control through a timetable of production is replaced by self-control and self-regulation of productive times and rhythms as a function of the choice of objectives, which is still determined by the bodies that manage productive unity. But these decisions might later be submitted to a democratic decision from below, asking the opinion of individuals employed in the various production units with the aim of implanting the process of self-management.

We are speaking of “suitable synchronism,” not realized once and for all, but dealt with time and again, for single productive periods or specific production campaigns and programs, with the aim of creating a convergence of interests between workers and employers, a convergence to be realized not only on the technical terrain of production, but also on the indirect plane of solicitation of some claim to the demand, which is to say, on the plane of the market.

In fact, it is really in the market that two movements within the new productive flexibility are joined together. The old factory looked to itself

as the center of the productive world and its structures as the stable element from which to start to conquer ever-expanding sections of consumption to satisfy. This would indirectly have to produce a worker-centered ideology, managed through guidance by a party of the sort called proletarian. The decline of this ideological-practical perspective could not be more evident today not so much because of the collapse of real socialism (and all the direct and indirect consequences that followed from this and continue to grow out of it), but due to the productive changes that we are discussing. There is thus no longer a distinction between the rigidity of production and the chaotic and unpredictable flexibility of the market. Both these aspects are now brought back under the common denominator of variability and streamlining. The greater ability to penetrate into consumption—whether foreseeing and soliciting it or restraining it—allows the old chaos of the market to be transformed into an acceptable, if not entirely predictable, flexibility. At the same time, the old rigidity of the world of production has changed into the new productive speed. These two movements are coming together in a new unifying dimension on which the economic and social domination of tomorrow will be built.

## LIKE IN CHURCH

**Massimo Passamani**

A known and hospitable place. I think that for the most part this is the image we have of the assembly. We read in a journal or on a poster that there is a meeting, a debate, and we find ourselves seated, almost always in a circle (perhaps in homage to the Enlightenment idea of “Encyclopedia,” which really means circular learning), waiting for someone to introduce and elucidate the topic for us. If the theme of the discussion is specific enough, we are convinced that expertise is required and so participation is quite limited. On the other hand, if it is a bit broader and more complex, everyone has her say without any deference. And yet in the end, one always remains a bit frustrated.

This is because, whatever is actually being discussed (that, upon consideration, encourages us to take part) the assembly in which it takes place is viewed as external, a well from which one draws, and, for the most part, draws little. In this way, the criticism is focused on the assembly and never on one's own participation.

Of course, we meet with people with whom we get along and do projects and initiatives outside the debates, but participation in an assembly as such

is not the outcome of an inquiry and a ripened interest. There is hardly any element of continuity between the various meetings, the reflections that precede them, and those that follow them. Just as no one asks us first what the topic of discussion means for us, so also there is little to remind us of it afterwards. At any rate, if one were to organize a meeting on the same topic after some time had passed, the discussion would start over again, each one giving a monologue in company.

In my opinion, this is not merely due to the insufficient determination of those who participate passively in the assemblies (even the act of speaking can be an element of passivity), but to something a bit deeper. In order to discuss together—in a meeting atmosphere, because in more limited contexts the discussion changes—it is necessary to have a determined set of words in common. The further one goes beyond the sphere of the specialty, the less one has to say. The proper words are lacking. This can be verified in many ways. If we take sufficiently specific contexts—let's say that of anarcho-syndicalism or the occupation of spaces—and, for fun, prohibit the ten words that so often form the language and mental universe of those who are involved in them, we realize that one couldn't even write a flyer. Maybe someone will say I exaggerate. Perhaps. But I am certain that



they are the very words that are not found with topics of a more general range.

Though it may seem strange, another limit is the necessity to perceive the immediately expedient twists and turns of the discussion at all costs. To achieve this aim that is somewhat forced, thought cannot always be freely developed. Ideas have need of empty space in which to move. And I believe that it is from this very *emptiness* that a real practice of liberation is born, a void that often brings rending where we thought the most solid unity existed.

As long as we meet to confront, let us say, more theoretical questions, delegation is reduced to a mere lack of deepening (which the phenomena of charisma and subordination can determine) but when there are important decisions to be made that presuppose knowledge of the subjects upon which the possible choices bear, anyone who has a greater knowledge of the matter has the power to direct the discussion. Or rather, considering the disparity of knowledge and the precise will to impose one's resolutions, there is no better environment than this in which to meet. In the long run, the technique of participation obtains better results than what one would get through unilateral propaganda or with the *ex cathedra* lecture.

Power is really seeking to take away our words

and our critical capacity to reflect in order to then give us the possibility of *expressing our opinion* on everything.

Nothing more can come to us from assemblies than what each of us as individuals strives to put into them. At best, those intuitions that our personal exploration suggests to us could be developed.

When there is no openness to listening, that is to say, to paying attention to new realms of thought, of *one's own* thought, we will always find ourselves saying the same things, whatever the topic of discussion may be.

Anchored to our faith like in a church (the name of which comes, perhaps not by chance, from the Greek *ecclesia*, that means, precisely, assembly), we repeat our rituals in order to go on back to our houses as always, with little questioned. Until the next discussion.

## A EULOGY TO OPINION

**Alfredo M. Bonanno**

Opinion is a vast merchandise that everyone possesses and uses. Its production involves a large portion of the economy, and its consumption takes up much of people's time. Its main characteristic is clarity.

We hasten to point out that there is no such thing as an unclear opinion. Everything is either yes or no. Different levels of thought or doubt, contradiction and painful confessions of uncertainty are foreign to it. Hence the great strength that opinion gives to those who use it and consume it in making decisions or who impose it on the decisions of others.

In a world that is moving at high speed toward positive/negative binary logic, from red button to black, this reduction is an important factor in the development of civil cohabitation itself. What would become of our future if we were to continue supporting ourselves on the unresolved cruelty of doubt? How could we be used? How could we produce?

Clarity emerges when the possibility of real choice is reduced. Only those with clear ideas know what to do. But ideas are never clear, so there

are those on the scene who clarify them for us, by supplying simple comprehensible instruments: not arguments but quizzes, not studies but alternative binaries. Simply day and night, no sunset or dawn. Thus they solicit us to pronounce ourselves in favor of this or that. They do not show us the various facets of the problem, merely a highly simplified construction. It is a simple affair to pronounce ourselves in favor of a yes or no, but this simplicity hides complexity instead of attempting to understand and explain it. No complexity, correctly comprehended, can in fact be explained except by referring to other complexities. There is no such thing as a solution to be encountered. Joys of the intellect and of the heart are cancelled by binary propositions, and are replaced with the utility of “correct” decisions.

But no one is stupid enough to believe that the world rests on two logical positive and negative binaries. Surely there is a place for understanding, a place where ideas again take over and knowledge regains lost ground. Therefore, the desire arises to delegate this all to others who seem to hold the answers to the elaboration of complexity because these others suggest simple solutions to us. They portray this elaboration as something that has taken place elsewhere and therefore represent themselves as witnesses and depositories of science.

So the circle closes. The simplifiers present themselves as those who guarantee the validity of the opinions asked, and their continual correct production in binary form. They seem to be wary of the fact that once opinion—this manipulation of clarity—has destroyed all capacity to understand the intricate tissue that underlies it, the complex unfoldings of the problems of conscience, the fevered activity of symbols and meanings, references and institutions, then it destroys the connective tissues of differences. It annihilates them in the binary universe of codification where reality seems to have only two possible solutions, the light on or the light off. The model sums up reality, cancels its nuances, and displays it in pre-wrapped formulas ready for consumption. Life projects no longer exist. Instead symbols take the place of desires and duplicate dreams, making them dreams twice over.

The unlimited amount of information potentially available to us does not allow us to go beyond the sphere of opinion. Just as most of the goods in a market where every possible, useless variety of the same product does not mean wealth and abundance but merely mercantile waste, an increase in information does not produce a qualitative growth in opinion. It does not produce any real capacity to decide what is true or false, good or bad, beautiful or ugly. It merely reduces one of these aspects to a

systematic representation of a dominant model.

In reality, there is no good on the one side or bad on the other. Rather there is a whole range of conditions, cases, situations, theories, and practices that only a capacity to understand can grasp, a capacity to use the intellect with the necessary presence of sensibility and intuition. Culture is not a mass of information, but a living and often contradictory system, through which we gain knowledge of the world and ourselves. This is a process which is at times painful and hardly ever satisfying, how we realize the relationships that constitute our life and our capacity to live.

By canceling out all of these nuances, we again find ourselves with a statistical curve in our hands, an illusory course of events produced by a mathematical model, not a fractured and overwhelming reality,

Opinion provides us with certainty on the one hand, but on the other it impoverishes us and deprives us of the capacity to struggle, because we end up convinced that the world is simpler than it is. This conviction is totally in the interest of those who control us. A mass of satisfied subjects convinced that science is on their side, is what they need in order to realize the projects of domination in the future.

## PATIENCE

Massimo Passamani

In my opinion, many of the misunderstandings relating to democratic management originate in the ambiguity of the concept of social consensus<sup>1</sup>. The following paragraph contains a line of reasoning that is now widespread among a good number of anarchists.

When the foundation of the society of domination was visibly brutal, the meaning of the practice of revolt was obvious to the exploited. If they did not rebel, it was precisely because the blackmail of the police and of hunger constrained them to resignation and misery. Therefore, it was necessary to act with determination against this blackmail. Now, however, state institutions benefit from the participation of the masses, however induced, since high pressure conditioning has made them consent. For this reason revolt should be shifted onto the plane of delegitimation, of the gradual and broadening erosion of social consensus. Consequently, it is by starting from these little zones where authority has lost its legitimacy, has been put in parentheses

1 The Italian word *consenso* can mean consensus, particularly in the sense of social consensus, or consent. In the text, I choose which term to use based on the context.

so to speak, that we could grow a project of social transformation. Or else rebellion becomes an end in itself: in the best of cases, a useless and misunderstood gesture of witness, in the worst of cases, a contribution to repression and a dangerous departure from the real needs of the exploited. It seems to me that this is the substance of a discussion that at different times gets dressed up in a thousand different ways.

In reality, this entire line of reasoning is based on a false presupposition, that is, on the separation of social consensus and repression. It is clear that the state needs both of these instruments of control, and I believe that no one falls into the insipid error of denying it. But recognizing that power cannot stand with the police alone, or with the television alone, is not enough. What is important is to understand how the police and the television relate to each other.

Legitimation and coercion seem to be different conditions only when social consensus is thought of as a kind of immaterial apparatus that shapes the materiality of command; in other words, when one thinks that the production of a specific psychological behavior—that of acceptance—lies somewhere other than in the structures of exploitation and obligation that are based on such an attitude. From this point of view, whether any such



production happens earlier (as preparation) or later (as a justification) is irrelevant. The thing that is of interest is that it doesn't happen at the same time. And this is where the separation of which I spoke is placed.

In reality, the division between the inner sphere of consciousness and the practical sphere of action only exists in the heads—and the projects—of priests of every stripe. But in the end even they are forced to give their heavenly fantasies an earthly terrain. Just as Descartes had to make the pineal gland into the place where the soul rested, so the bourgeoisie designated private property as the stronghold of their impoverished, sanctified I. In a similar manner, the modern democrat, not knowing where to place social consensus, has recourse to the vote and the opinion poll. As the last one to arrive, the up-to-date libertarian situates the delegitimizing practice in a “non-state public sphere” with mysterious boundaries.

Social consensus is a commodity just like a hamburger or the need for prison. Indeed, if the most totalitarian society is the one that knows how to give chains the color of freedom, it has become the commodity *par excellence*. If the most effective repression is the sort that blots out the very desire for rebellion, social consensus is preventative repression, policing of ideas and decision. Its pro-

duction is material like that of the barracks or the supermarket. Newspapers, television, and advertising are powers equal to banks and armies.

When the problem is posed in this way, it becomes clear how so-called legitimation is nothing other than command. Social consensus is force, and its imposition is exercised through precise structures. This means—and here is the conclusion that no one wants to draw—that it can be attacked. In the contrary situation, one would be clashing with a phantom that, once it is visible, has already won. Our possibility for acting would be completely one with our impotence. I could certainly strike this realization of power, but its legitimation always arrives—from where no one knows—before and after my attack and nullifies its meaning.

As you can see, one's way of understanding the reality of domination gives rise to one's way of conceiving revolt. And vice versa.

Participation in power's projects has become more widespread and daily life is increasingly colonized. City planning renders police control partially superfluous and virtual reality destroys all dialogue. All this increases the necessity for insurrection (it certainly doesn't eliminate it). If we were to wait for everyone to become anarchists before making revolution, Malatesta said, we'd be in trouble. If we were to wait for the delegitima-

tion of power before attacking it, we'd be in trouble. But fortunately, waiting is not among the risks of the insatiable. The only thing we have to lose is our patience.

## PRISONERS OF A SINGLE WORLD

**Gruppo Anarchico Insurrezionalista**  
**"E. Malatesta"**

*The fact is that the state would not be so pernicious if those who wanted to were able to ignore it and live their lives in their own way together with those with whom they get along. But it has invaded every function of social life, standing over all the activities of our lives and we are even prevented from defending ourselves when we are attacked.*

*It is necessary to submit to it or bring it down.*

—Errico Malatesta

If we were not deeply dissatisfied with this world, we would not write in this paper and you would not read this article. It is therefore useless to waste further words to confirm our aversion to Power and its manifestations. Rather, what seems useful to us is the attempt to determine whether a revolt is possible that is not openly and resolutely against the state and power.

The question should not seem odd. In fact, there are those who see in the struggle against the state nothing but a further confirmation of the

extent to which it has penetrated into us, managing to determine our actions—even if only in the negative. With its cumbersome presence, the state would distract us from what should be our true objective: living life our way. If we think of taking down the state, of obstructing it, of fighting it, we don't have the time to reflect on what we want to do ourselves. Rather than trying to realize our dreams here and now, we follow the state wherever it goes, becoming its shadow, and putting off to infinity the realization of our projects. In a frenzy to be antagonist, to be against, we end up no longer being protagonist, in favor of something. Thus, if we want to be ourselves, we should cease to oppose ourselves to the state and start to consider it not with hostility, but with indifference. Rather than giving ourselves to trying to destroy its world—the world of authority—it is better to build our own, that of freedom. It is necessary to stop thinking about the enemy, what it does, where it is found, how to strike it, and dedicate ourselves to ourselves, to our “daily life,” to our relationships, to our spaces that need to expand and improve more and more. Otherwise, we will never do anything but follow the inclinations of power.

The anarchist movement today is full of this sort of reasoning, the continual search for justifications disguised as theoretical analyses that

excuse one's absolute inaction. There are those who want to do nothing because they are skeptical, those who do not want to impose anything on anyone, those who consider power too strong for them and those who don't want to follow its rhythms and times; every one of these excuses is good. But these anarchists, do they have a dream capable of setting their hearts aflame?

In order to clear the field of these miserable excuses, it is worth the effort to remember a few things. There are not two worlds, ours and theirs, and even if, to be absurd, separate worlds did exist, how could they be made to co-exist? There is a single world, the world of authority and money, of exploitation and obedience: the world in which we are all forced to live. It is impossible to pretend that we are outside. This is why we cannot allow ourselves to be indifferent, this is why we cannot ignore it. If we oppose ourselves to the state, if we are always quick to seize the occasion to attack it, it is not because we are indirectly molded by it, it is not because we have sacrificed our desires on the altar of revolution, but because our desires cannot be realized as long as the state exists, as long as any Power exists. The revolution does not distract us from our dreams, but rather is the only possibility that allows the conditions for the realization of our dreams. We want to overturn this world as quickly

as possible here and now, because here and now there are only barracks, courts, banks, concrete, supermarkets, prisons. Here and now there is only exploitation, while freedom, as we understand it, does not really exist.

This does not mean that we give up on creating spaces of our own in which to experiment with the relationships that we prefer. It only means that these spaces, these relationships, do not represent the complete freedom that we desire for ourselves and for everyone. They are a step, but not the final one, much less the definitive one. A freedom that ends on the threshold of our occupied house, of our “free” commune, is not enough, it does not satisfy us. Such freedom is illusory, because it frees only as long as we stay at home and don’t leave the confines that are imposed on us. If we don’t consider the necessity of attacking the state (and there is much that we could say about this concept of “attack”), then, by definition, we can only do what it allows us to do at its convenience, forever, limiting ourselves to surviving in the little “happy isle” that we build ourselves. Keeping our distance from the state means conserving life, confronting it means living.

Our capitulation is implicit in indifference toward the state. It is as if we were admitting that the state is stronger, is invincible, is beyond contestation,

one might as well lay down one's arms and consider cultivating one's kitchen garden. Is it possible to call this revolt? It seems to us rather to be a completely inner attitude, circumscribed by a kind of diffidence: incompatibility with, and disinterest in that which surrounds us. But resignation remains implicit in such an attitude. Contemptuous resignation if you will, but resignation nonetheless.

It is like throwing punches that are limited to warding off blows without ever trying to bring down the adversary that one hates. But our adversary does not give us any respite. We cannot merely leave the ring and go on making a laughing-stock of it. It is necessary to bring our adversary down; dodging and expressing our disappointment in it is not sufficient.



## CAMOMILLO

Penelope Nin

At this time, a lot of anarchists from all over Italy are flooding into Rome.

A month ago, by the order of a public prosecutor who was looking for easy glory, about thirty enemies of authority were taken into custody and locked up in Rebibbia, a prison in the outlying suburbs. To protest against the arrogance and vengeful spirit of the judges who have decided to take away their freedom, one of them has begun a hunger and thirst strike to the death.

But last Saturday, these anarchists were not alone in breathing the air of the eternal city. Others joined them there, guests this time of the international bookshop, *Il Manifesto*, where they went to chatter—together with communists, marxists and historians—about Camillo Berneri, “an anarchist between Gramsci and Gobetti,” per the title of the conference. It was promoted by the daily newspaper of via Tomacelli<sup>1</sup>, by the libertarian studies center of Milan, and by the Historical Review of Anarchism of Pisa, in collaboration with the Roman bookshop Anomolia.

It's a good thing that there are anarchists will-

<sup>1</sup> Also called *Il Manifesto*.—translator.

ing to cleanse the good name of anarchy, washing away the awful reputation that a few hotheads would like to attach to it. In printing the news of the arrests a month ago, *Il Manifesto* had already attentively made note of how the investigators “a bit too easily” granted “a single ideological-political motivation to actions that seem like those of a band of common criminals.” But a fine convention organized all together was the thing needed to dissipate the last doubts, to finally bring back a bit of serenity.

In response to this proposal, it was immediately said that a better subject could not have been chosen. What anarchist more than Camomillo Berneri could have brought anarchists and personages such as Valentino Parlato, Goffredo Fofi (who is publishing an anthology of Berneri’s writings), and Enzo Santarelli onto a common terrain? Figures of this sort certainly could not remain insensitive to the fascination exercised by the leading exponent of anarchist revisionism and by his unsettling definitions of Anarchy—“the society in which technical authority, stripped of every function of political domination, comes to form a hierarchy conceived and realized as a system of distribution of work”—and of freedom—“the power of obeying reason.” “Anarchist *sui generis*”<sup>2</sup>—so he loved

2 “his own kind of anarchist”.—translator.

to describe himself—Bernerri fought like a lion to bring anarchism out from the mists of utopia at blows with reality. “Better the present evil than something worse” was the battle cry that accompanied him throughout his life and to which he always remained faithful. This sense of measure led him to salute the Bolshevik regime in 1918, despise abstentionism<sup>3</sup> (which he dismissed as “cretinism”), collaborate with liberals like Gobetti, and make sympathetic gestures toward a part of the Catholic world with which he shared the idea of woman as wife, procreator, and ideal housekeeper. And the deep sense of duty, which Camomillo identified with God, is what made him write words full of cautious common sense about the necessity of money and the inevitability of prison, with the consciousness that it is always necessary to reach a “compromise between the Idea and the fact, between tomorrow and today.”

Bernerri was killed in Barcelona during the days of May 1937, in the heat of the Spanish revolution. His martyrdom earned him canonization by a part of the venerable anarchist Church. The fact that his murderers were precisely the communists who Parlato, Fofi, and their comrades praised so highly up until recently is an utterly insignificant particular.

3 refusal to participate in the electoral process.—translator.

The fact remains that only Camomillo Berneri—the anarchist who used to candidly maintain that “a minimum of authority is indispensable”—could have become the line of union between stalinists and anarchists, the unbelievers who—like Gobetti and Gramsci—do nothing but feed dogma with their heresy.

But, okay, let's say it: as far as it goes, these judges are perfectly right. There are anarchists and “anarchists.” Some are bad and are rightly in prison. But others—among them, it is worthwhile to recall, a few of the proposers of this convention, Claudio VENZA, Gianni Carrozza, Giampietro Berti—are good. So good that they can enjoy the esteem of all the respectable people of this world.

A toast therefore to Camomillo. And to hell with the “anarchists” in prison.

## WORDS, RIGHTS, AND THE POLICE

Massimo Passamani

The right to free speech is a lie. First, because it is a right and as such only acts to reinforce the power of those who have the authority to grant it or recognize it (which are the same thing). Second, because it is put in place when the possibility of *speaking*, of saying something to someone who is able to understand it, no longer exists. In other words, it appears *afterwards*, when the condition which it tries to safeguard is already suppressed. Third, because it is separated from the practical possibility of action and is therefore only an abstraction that serves other abstractions. Deprived of the oxygen that only the space of relationships and confrontations, and thus of communication and experimentation, assures to them, ideas remain powerless, gasping on the shore of opinions that talk about everything and change nothing. I would like to express a few thoughts about this last aspect.

Showing its ability to tolerate words (with a few exceptions for subversive ones), democratic power has created a “free” zone in which to conceal their responsibility by transforming these words, precisely, into opinions. For example, what does a politician do? He speaks. Of course, he ex-

plotts, he oppresses, he kills. But he is not the one who pulls the trigger. He is not the one who forces you to need money to survive. He is not the one who throws you down from the scaffolding. He is not even the one who makes the double lock that locks in your acts of rebellion. When he appears, he merely discusses, responds politely to questions, smiles at criticisms, adds, refutes, and amends. It almost seems that by speaking better than he (which doesn't take much), reasoning more correctly (which takes even less) and undermining his defensive arguments, our idea of freedom might win. And journalists? Could someone maybe shoot someone else because she has different ideas than ours? One moment. He defends an act of war, praises a *carabinieri* operation that will send several dozen north Africans back home, asks a judge to apply the maximum penalty, convinces our political friends (or is convinced by them) that thirty-five years of work is not so very much, explains to us that the reason for a recent ecological disaster was the lack of laws, attacks a corrupt industrialist in order to avoid telling us that they all are, causes us to worry about an adulterated food product (never telling us which one isn't) in order to hide the reasons for a revolt in China, in Palestine, or in an Italian prison. In short, she plays with adjectives on other people's hides. So what? Would one want to attribute the

responsibility for all that happens in the world to a fabricator of syllables? It is necessary to take it out on those who act, not with those who speak. Fine. But who *acts*? We don't know, we don't see, and when he appears, he counts for nothing. So it is really true, as revolutionaries have always said, that social conditions are the cause of oppression. Magnificent. But there is something wrong when the masters themselves are saying this. By doing so, they hide their own responsibility in the generalized irresponsibility. There is something wrong when everyone is forced to act without considering the consequences (who could predict or even recognize them in such a *complex* world?), with freedom as the alibi. And year after year, these consequences produce an abundance of new causes.

If bureaucracy and administration—the power of Nobody—are ruling, if a slave can no longer see who is commanding her, then tyranny has nearly perfected itself. Also one of the best defense weapons—treating the scoundrels who “speak” like the scoundrels who “act”—appears to be almost entirely blunted. The right to free speech. But who can argue that “acting” is always more fraught with responsibility than, for example, writing? Why condemn the one who, blinded by his phantoms, suddenly kills a prostitute or a transsexual, and absolve the one who, in the calm enclosure of his library,

appeals to history for some arguments to justify *in words* some military aggression against a category of Enemies of the fatherland and of democracy? Why desire the use of force against one who beats up immigrants while merely “energetically denouncing” anyone who provides cultural, social and even economic reasons for the beatings *in words*?

Was Eluard so different from the Stalinist murderers whose praises he sang in poems—that is to say, in elegant words that were not only said, but were said with the suitable form and rhythm? And the exploited person who speaks as a racist because he is afraid of losing not just his job, but also the *security* of his exploitation? And the exploiter, giving and taking away this security from the height of his power, who speaks of antiracism? And the one who writes for the one who speaks (who composes speeches for some statesman, for example), is he *twice* as safe for this reason? And what about the one who speaks *after* acting?

Personally, I recognize the *right* of someone to support tyranny in words to the same extent that I acknowledge the *right* to tyrannize. I place the journalistic defenders of state terrorism hit by a bullet on the same level as cops or fascist squad members who are killed. Risks of the trade. Anyone who speaks or writes like a scoundrel is a scoundrel, so much more so since the cultural means available



for understanding how despicable it is to pay such tribute to the master are better. I don't make concessions for what an exploited person says. And I don't change positions toward an exploiter, regardless of what he says.

And anarchists? Here it starts to get painful. To give an example, a representative of a leftist party was invited to an anarchist initiative. Why was he invited? This already deserves some discussion. But there he is, he takes the microphone and speaks. Someone disagrees and doesn't allow him to speak. It's simple, this someone is a fascist. He doesn't accept confrontation—his reasons are lacking. Freedom of speech is sacred for anarchists. One moment. I am that someone. I don't lack reasons (few are needed), but they don't come into it. If the party representative were to have a meeting on the immense beauty of anarchy, it would change nothing. Just as it would change nothing if he were to participate in the organization of the initiative without speaking. The question is not what he says at the moment, but what he does with words and what he says with actions. He himself is in question. I am still of the opinion that those who are tolerated by power are not to be tolerated at our initiatives. In confronting them, rather than turning to dialogue, I prefer *the practice of merited insult*. And if Prodi or even Agnelli were to come to speak,

and someone were to jump on them, would this mean that Capital has more reasons than subversion does? Would this attacker also be a fascist, because she didn't wait for them to finish speaking before jumping on them? The usual exaggeration; everybody knows that they are rogues. So the "right to free speech" is not for everyone (fascists included), but only for those whose liabilities are *acceptable* (a Parlato for example)? As is clear, there is something else. In fact, the party representative is not even attacked in words (with Reasons). On the contrary, they do conferences together, he is asked to write the foreword of some book, he marches nearby in protest marches. At the front are the police (these ones of few words) that our leftist friend defends in the columns of his newspaper or in some chamber of the republic.

Okay now, in this family photo, I think I recognize it better. It is right in the middle, the right to free speech.

## HE JOKES WITH MEN

Penelope Nin

*But expropriations and violent actions that put the lives of people at risk, and more generally the theory and practice of illegalism at all costs are far from our anarchism. Such actions are in clear contrast with the anti-violent Malatestian spirit that we have made our own.*

—*Germinal*, # 71/72, p. 26

The greatest misfortune that can befall a human being endowed with any quality is to be surrounded by followers. As long as he remains alive, he will be perpetually compelled to keep watch so that nothing stupid is said or done in his name, toil that proves useless when, after his death, the initiates quarrel over how to advance the path of his endeavor. The followers are never at the level of their “teacher,” since only those who lack their own ideas take on those of others—becoming, precisely, their followers. Thus, followers not only prove to be incapable of advancing something that has already been started, but since they lack the qualities of the one who came before them, they easily reach the point of distorting and betraying the ideas they claim to support.

The phenomenon, deprecable in itself, takes on ludicrous and even amusing features and directions, particularly when the unfortunate “teacher” is an anarchist, that is to say an individual hostile to all authority and therefore opposed in principle to the herd mentality. And yet who can deny that even within the anarchist movement such cases have occurred? To avoid going too far, it is enough to consider Errico Malatesta, the famous Italian anarchist.

All the friends and scholars of the thoughts of Malatesta have had to agree on one fact. His sole preoccupation, his sole desire throughout his life was to make revolution. For Malatesta, there was no doubt: anarchists are such because they want anarchy and it is only possible to realize anarchy by making revolution, a revolution necessarily violent, the first step of which is insurrection. It seems a banality, and indeed it is. And yet it is a banality from which many anarchists distance themselves with disgust.

Luigi Fabbri wrote: “Insurrection is the necessary and inescapable event of every revolution, the concrete event through which it becomes reality for everyone. It is from this fact that Malatesta’s aversion grew for every theory and method that tends, directly or indirectly, to discredit it, to avert the attention of the masses and the activity of revolutionaries from it, to replace it with means that are

apparently more convenient and peaceful.”

Not just revolutionary (since “anyone can call themselves revolutionary while using prudence to postpone the desired transformation to far distant times—when the time is ripe, as they say),” Malatesta was above all an insurrectionist. He wanted to make the revolution immediately—a revolution understood “in the sense of violent change carried out through force against the preserving powers; and it thus implies material struggle, armed insurrection, with the retinue of barricades, armed groups, the confiscation of goods from the class against which one fights, sabotage of the means of communications, etc.”—not in a distant and undefined future, but immediately, as quickly as possible, as soon as the occasion presented itself, an occasion that had to be created intentionally by anarchists if it did not come on its own through natural events.

Yes, I know; who is not familiar with certain critiques Malatesta made of violence and polemics that he wrote about Emile Henry or Paolo Schichi? Nevertheless, Malatesta did not deny the legitimacy and even the necessity of the use of violence as such; he only opposed a violence that “strikes blindly, without distinguishing between the guilty and the innocent.” It is no accident that the example of blind violence that he usually gave was that of the bomb that exploded in Barcelona dur-

ing a religious procession, causing forty deaths and numerous injuries. This is because he would have no critique to make in the face of rebellious actions against precise targets that have no consequence for extraneous people. In fact, in the course of one of his famous interviews conceded to *Le Figaro*, in which the interviewer tried to press him to disapprove of Ravachol's bombs, and of the attack at the boulevard Magenta, Malatesta answered: "Your conclusions are hasty. In the affair of rue Clichy, it seems quite clear to me that it was intended to blow up a judge; but I regret that it was carried out—quite involuntarily, I believe—in a way that brought injury to people whom he had not considered. As to the bomb of boulevard Magenta—oh! I have no reservations about that! Lherot and Very had become accomplices of the police and it was a fine act of struggle to blow them up."

It seems clear that all the discussion and polemics that occurred in those distant years—that certain present-day anarchists run through again in order to sell us the image of an anti-violent Malatesta—were not in fact aimed at the use of violence in itself, but only the limits one could not exceed without placing the very principles of anarchism in question, or at most those limits suggested by considerations of a tactical order.

But let's leave "the dark end of an earlier cen-

ture” and the polemics that then raged in the anarchist movement, and return to the present. No explosive actions claimed by anarchists in recent years could be considered as being carried out in a “blind” and “insensitive” manner. Rather all could be said to have been directed against the structures of domination without putting “the lives of people at risk.” So how can one justify the repudiation of these actions on the part of certain anarchists? Certainly not by borrowing from the thoughts of Malatesta since saying that there is a limit to the use of violence is not the same thing as saying that one must never have recourse to it.

Having recourse to the dead does not serve to justify one’s indolence.

## THE TWO FACES OF THE PRESENT

Massimo Passamani

*One cannot enter twice into the same river.*  
—Heracleitus

*What's new? There's Clio.*  
—A Renault advertisement

The totalitarian dream of power is to make us bathe not twice, but thousands of times in the same river. The governors of time want to force us to survive within the walls of an eternal present—the social measurement of a continuous and collective deferment of life to the future.

What happened today? The images of products on advertisements changed. Some different faces appeared on television and an identical commentary gathered facts in a different order. A statesman disappeared into the void that is absence from the news after forty years in government. For forty years, it was a difficult enterprise not to come across his name at least once a day—now he has become a perfect Carneade. What happened today?

Capital has managed to make almost all the activity of individuals nearly identical day after day. The way in which they dream of doing something



different (the career, the unexpected prize, fame, love) is also identical. But bodies, though malnourished and atrophied, are different from each other and from themselves from one moment to the next. Everything that has happened can even be reconstructed and rewritten (“one never knows what the past reserves for us” as a worker under the Stalinist regime commented), but bodies are not recuperated, not yet.

Power has made recycling, in all senses, its proper practice and ideology. The science of transplants—which an effective euphemism calls “the frontiers of medicine”—has been working for some time so that the exchange of parts insures an ever-longer survival to the social machine that is the human body. Like all the other property of the state domain, individual existence obeys only one imperative: to endure. For anyone who produces (automobiles or rights, resignation or false critiques, it matters little), domination is quick to replace an arm, a liver, a heart. In the name of progress any organ of anyone who is no longer of service can be easily sacrificed. On the other hand, as a doctor favorable to transplants said, “If someone is clinically dead, why waste all that good stuff?”

Human beings whose opinions are interchangeable, just like the performances carried out during work and “free time,” must have the bodies

they deserve. This serial world wants everything to be in its image and likeness.

Only religion is left to talk of tomorrow (ideologies, as is well known, are all dead). Capital, however, speaks of today, speaks of that which must be bought and sold now. But at bottom religion and capital say the same thing. The first distances happiness, the second brings misery close. For both, the future is the thing that is always the same, for which one sacrifices the previous day that becomes the present. The next day, one starts again.

What happened today?

*Living beyond laws that enslave, beyond narrow rules, even beyond theories formulated for the generations to come. Living without believing in earthly paradise. Living for the present hour beyond the mirage of future societies. Living and feeling existence in the fierce pleasure of social battle. It is more than a state of mind: it is a way of being, and immediately.*

—Zo d'Axa

Quick—graffiti from May '68 in France

The struggle against oppression is merely the indispensable minimum of an insurrection that wants to lay hold of life. It is now that one plays the game,

not tomorrow or the day after. Our lives are much too short and there have never been so many kings' heads to chop off.

The unsuccessful realization of militance has produced its wretched counter-image everywhere. There is no longer anyone speaking of the duties to the Cause and promising the future society. All are for the "here and now," quick to accuse every discussion and every practice that does not guarantee the security of the known and approved here and now of martyrdom and messianism. On sale today is militance in its most laicized version: realism.

To those who talk of wanting to enjoy life without concerning themselves over the oppressors, one can only respond in one way: by watching how they live. One will discover how much they accept the way the oppressors concern themselves over them.

The one who does not hide the limits and impositions by which she is constrained knows that, beyond empty proclamations, one can be outside of that which exists only to the extent to which she is against it. Precisely because he wants much more, he launches herself into the struggle.

When she lacks the strength, he has no need of an ideology of pleasure to disguise his weakness and fear. They exist and are part of the game as well,

like love and hatred, relationships torn away from exchange value and actions that spit in the face of the order of passivity.

My ideas, my activity, and my body are not those of yesterday, nor of everyone—so she desires to think and feel. Today something happened. Each day he must release her own unique perfume from the impersonality—now secretly, now with the roar of the tempest. Then one can speak of tomorrow as well. As it is currently written for us, there is only slavery behind the imperative: Attend to the future.

In a time that is always the same, the rulers of survival want to impose their measure on each and all. The immeasurability of our demands is the only true necessity of a change much more than necessary, and that is to say, possible.

**Today something happened.**

## THE LINK THAT ISN'T THERE

Mario Cacciucco

In addition to explaining, language in its function of allowing communication between individuals, situations, and materiality is set the misguided task of enclosing within syllables, emotions, mental states, and relationships between individuals and others.

In my opinion, the mystification of relationships of love and friendship is spurious. Examples from lived experience would be a great help in explaining my reflection, but I want to try to clarify it by using, in my own way, the written word.

I start from the presupposition that every individual is different in her attitudes, aspirations, physical aspect, pleasures. The relationships that exist between individuals are like spheres that bounce off each other in a whirl of contacts, without causing any fusion. Modifications, but never fusions. I on the other, the other on me. In every instance, each sphere maintains its uniqueness. Starting from my own uniqueness, I thus decide to embark on an unlimited search for contacts and situations close to mine, in order to realize myself excessively by enjoying the differences of others. And I do so by affirming my will to preserve my decision-making abilities however and whenever. In general, I rec-

ognize the difference of others, I am attracted to it, like a child who sees a clown pirouette and is attracted by the novelty and likableness that it communicates to him. I recognize the charm of all that is external to me, the known, the less-known and the unknown.

The contacts that I establish may be more or less lasting. Circumstance contributes to a large extent. But they always end with the option of re-opening.

When I talk about seeking affinity, I mean granting myself a series of contacts with other individuals, which do not cause harm to my capacity to act, but are rather capable of giving me new strength, new capacities, multiplying the bouncing of my sphere on those of others, something indispensable for the search for myself and my satisfaction. The common meanings of “love” and “friendship” thus leave me perplexed.

When relationships open, one cannot establish *a priori* how they might extend or end themselves. Relationships are and that is all. The randomness of events and the manifestation of individual will contribute to creating a certain something. And when I say a certain something, I mean everything. From the most heated passions to carnality to crime to sensory ecstasy to esteem to indifference to annoyance.

Excluding is a bit like making laws, depriving oneself of possibilities for movement. Uniting different events can cause the sense of their originality and uniqueness to be lost. If for some a kiss is love, for me each time is a sensation of the lips to experiment with.

The individuals with whom I share moments are profoundly different from one another. Each instance, having peculiar characteristics, has nothing to do with any other instance. There is no doubt.

So, what is love and what is friendship when one speaks of relationships? Are they oracles to which we prostrate ourselves or obstacles to everything? Who is the person with whom we can, with certainty, take part in one of these categories? And wouldn't this certainty be a misguided and misleading boldness? Wouldn't it always be too small? If "the fragile cage of language" is what creates these problems for us, why not enter into more contact with oneself and do away with these oh so mysterious and intangible words that lead our personal emotions and agreeableness back to something that doesn't exist? Why make oneself the spokesperson of concepts aimed at defining, establishing, when an unconditioned eruption of our desires could cancel all this in order to lead it into the abyss of the possible, the conceivable? And why not clearly, decisively, forcefully destroy the relationship when

it becomes hateful to us since the past is extraneous to the extent that you can no longer put your hands on it. And memories are useful, more than anything else, to those who momentarily live far from their will.

Comrades, friends, lovers, for me dissolution unites all these descriptions. I love, I prefer, I choose in my own way, as a lawless one. I don't know what love is, and I don't know what friendship is, perhaps because they don't exist or perhaps because I have no need to use these words, because I have a more or less clear idea of the dynamic of knowing and standing together with others, in agreement or disagreement.

Relationships without the disquieting and unbearable presence of authority are the only ones that I put up with, and I rely on them to express my boundless I. When one of these relationships tends to create a bit of restlessness or sacrifice or that smarmy thing known as tolerance, then I hold that the time has come to remove myself from it, to start over in another of the infinite situations that the existent proposes to me.

Starting again from a gratifying detachment.



## A LITTLE, LITTLE GIANT

*Il Panda*

*[There are moments when it seems that anything could open up, that all possibilities are in play. These are the moments we need to seize in order to realize our rebellious dreams. There are no guarantees in these moments, only possibilities. The following article was written in the midst of one such moment that occurred several years ago in France.—translator]*

It is not just a matter of proportions. We always appear so very small in the face of this overwhelming world that not only seems incomprehensible—with its endless and intricate network of relationships and dependencies between endless causes and effects—but also unassailable.

Yes, of course, we'd like to turn this world upside down, we'd like to destroy these relationships, but we don't know where to begin; everything seems useless to us, all our destructive fury seems reduced to an almost inoffensive tickle against an impassive giant. Our hearts are stirred to revolt, but how many times have we run up against the supposed immutability of the giant that oppresses us? The pot is boiling, we think; but we don't know how to lift its lid; this blessed pot, we don't under-

stand its rhyme or reason. And even if the urgency of things always goads us into action, it doesn't seem that this primes the mechanism that could put the existent into a hard spot. Our continued clashes with the world don't succeed in reproducing themselves, rousing the passions, the wild and collective feasts, the revolutions that we desire. And yet, as we know, the giant is neither so big nor so passive as we imagine it to be. The feast is always right around the corner, because if the paths of domination are infinite, so are the paths of revolt: the giant that we have in our heads is really a network of relations, enormous indeed, but quite concrete, and these relations use determined channels, determined paths. And these paths could, indeed, be blocked, priming, in time, unpredictable mechanisms.

Such an eventuality has been bringing difficult moments to life for the French for several weeks. Truck drivers—those wage-laborers who drive back and forth across France and Europe, transporting commodities for the profit of capital—are on strike. Not only are all these goods not being bought and sold, with all the consequent problems for French cities and the economy; in fact, by strike, the French truck drivers did not just mean a mere abstention from work. No, they park their semis at the entrances of cities, on the expressways and block traffic; or they surround refineries in order to

prevent the resupplying of fuel.

Bordeaux is already completely blocked, like a consistent number of the cities of the west and the southeast, and the seige is starting in Paris. Think, what is aroused by a blockade of this sort: already, just a few short days after the start of the protest, a few factories are noticeably slowing down production. Without raw materials, industry can't work since its products are not transported and sold. And along with the factories, offices and ministries are shaken.

What can happen in a blockaded city? Everything and nothing, it's a question of *time*. Cities are built around work and its time. The time of the city is scanned from the hands of a clock, the ticking of which rules our lives, brands our days with fire. The office, the family, Sundays, evenings, survival doesn't survive without the ticking of the clocks.

However, in a blockaded city, time might not have any more need for clock faces and hands. It is released from work; it can expand and contract improbably even to the point of vanishing.

This might be dangerous for the giant. You will see that, without time, strange ideas enter people's minds, strange vices are born that unleash unpredictable mechanisms—to such an extent that they displace the narrow limits of demands, beyond which it no longer matters what the truck drivers

wanted to negotiate—whether wages, pensions or work hours—because what is at stake is something else entirely, something for everyone.

Or else nothing could happen in a blockaded city. It could be a huge, very sad Sunday.

The pot boils and the giant is never too big for us; it cannot even sleep peacefully. Its arteries—roads, electric wires and computer networks—are exposed and can be cut, generating an infinite and unpredictable series of possibilities.

## THE BACK SIDE OF HISTORY

Massimo Passamani

Putting the past back in play to make an adventure of the future—I believe that this perspective contains the reasons for keeping past theoretical and practical experiences from becoming only material for historians.

History is always the history of the masters, and this is not just because, as is well known, they are the ones who write it, but also because this world, their world, forces us to look at it through its own eyes. The organizers of obedience have always used the past for the purposes of police and propaganda, but this did not keep them from knowing it. On the contrary, precisely this knowledge has allowed power to unite events in the coherence of control, sacrifice, and repression. For the past to carry out its function as an argument for the current society, it must know at least what to *remove*, which is to say, the most significant reasons and episodes of the struggles of the exploited—everything that history now presents merely as defeats. The exploited, on the contrary, have rarely been able to reduce history to a dull chronology—or to a calendar vision with dates to celebrate—in order to find another coherence for it, that of revolt, and so to understand the

motives, the most radical motives and their limits.

The apologists for domination have obviously not given up rewriting the past, but they are increasingly unfamiliar with it. In a world where one responds to every cause for malaise with a remedy that is even worse and that *guarantees* only the complete irresponsibility of the one who applies it; where the passivity of work is extended into “free time” through the contemplation of a screen (television or the computer); in which the masters themselves—powerful because of the submission that is conceded to them in the hope that they, at least, know where this world is going—are that much more self-assured because they have increasingly made the law (“as long as it lasts”) their own—in such an idiotic world that desires *eternity*, the past has no meaning. Now, if, on the one hand, this reinforces the totalitarianism of the present society (outside of me there is nothing), on the other hand, it renders its administrators more stupid. (For the moment, since they can allow it.) The intelligence—even historical—of a strategy of preservation is proportional to the dangers of revolt.

On the same level (here is why I said that one looks at history with the eyes of the masters), even subversives have felt “freer” once relieved of the weight of knowledge of the past. This is the idea that history (not just that of specialists, but even

that which does not separate ideas and actions, that is written out of desire and that arms the intelligence) ends up imprisoning life. What goes unnoticed is just how *historical* this idea is. (What is the difference if a reflection originates from reading what someone has said or from knowing what someone has done? Let's think of it as so many individuals together. Why is the first reflection considered, for example "philosophy," while the second is considered "history"? In my opinion, there is no distinction.) Paraphrasing a well known aphorism, one can only say that the present ignorance has retroactive value. Now, this ignorance has many faces, if, as is evident, its distributors are, above all, the historians (including those "of the movement").

So as not to go on for too long, it is enough to consider all the advertising noise about a film on the Spanish revolution. To many anarchists this did not seem right. At last, the black and red banner, the revolutionary union, the collectives, self-management, Durutti. Now, to tell the truth, we ourselves are speaking.

Personally, to make myself clear, I have nothing against discussions and books about the Spanish revolution, but has all this talk about it contributed to our understanding this distant event better? (And this "better," for anarchists, would have to be in the sense of a *current* perspective.) Frankly, I don't

think so. It seems to me, on the contrary, to contribute more to mummification, to testimonial, to monumental history. As often occurs, the occasion predetermined the contents. Books on libertarian revolution have increased. And yet, what does one say about a revolutionary movement—not just the Spanish one—like that of the 1930s? What would self-management of the factories mean now? What do we do about unions? To which places of capital could the conception of insurrection now be linked? How do we create possibilities so that the revolutionary moment passes suddenly, without transition, to the destruction or radical transformation of these places? What does it mean, in reality, to overthrow authority; what does it mean to abolish the market? Only by posing questions like these does discussion of revolutionary Spain take on significance. Only in this way does it become an open question in itself. One can understand little if one looks to it as the realization, however temporary, of an ideal. With such an approach, all that is left to do is to distribute the small images of the saints. And then, for this celebration, it is necessary to dress up the events (even the bureaucratic control and the counter-revolution of leading “anarchists”) in their Sunday best. Why, for example, is so little known about the days of May 1937 in Barcelona? Why does no one speak of the calls from the *uncontrol-*



*lables* who said that the “anarchist” ministers were reactionaries like all the rest, and that it was necessary to shoot them as well, just like all the others?

A few pages of history says more than an entire encyclopedia when the theoretical suggestion for a practice of reinventing it is read into the events themselves. One need only read in this way to know it. It would then be interesting to really reflect on the dirty tricks and the mistakes (and also on the splendid, joyous strengths) of those days. To connect those days to other insurrections and to other errors. To connect them to the present. To give an example, one could reread the history of insurrectional movements through the fracture—moral rather than police-related—represented by money (one thinks of the refusal to attack banks, starting from the Paris Commune, passing through revolutionary Spain, ending up at the French May [1968]; or, on the other hand, of the expropriations by workers in insurgent Patagonia in the 1930s). Just as one can read it under the subterranean sign of gratuity and of the festival, or of amorous relationships. Or, or...

But those who attack property, silence leaders, and shake up current social relationships without any aims, what might they tell us about individuals who tried to do this yesterday, the day before, or seventy years ago?

## BEYOND THE LAW

Penelope Nin

To tell the truth, I don't quite understand what is meant today when people speak of "illegalism." I thought this word was no longer in use, that it could no longer slip out of the history books of the anarchist movement, that it was shut up forever with the equally ancient "propaganda of the deed". When I have heard it talked about again in recent times (in such shamelessly critical tones), I haven't been able to hold back a sensation of astonishment. I begin to find intolerable this mania for dusting off old arguments in order to avoid dealing with new discussions, but there is so much of it.

One thing, however, seems clear to me. The illegalism that is spoken of (badly) today is not the concept that was debated with so much heart-felt animation by the anarchist movement at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At that time this term was used for all those practices prohibited by law that were useful for resolving the economic problems of comrades: robbery, theft, smuggling, counterfeiting money, and so on. It seems to me that today some anarchists, lacking anything concrete to discuss, are tending much too easily to claim that illegalism means a refined glorification for its own sake of

every behavior forbidden by law, not only of those dictated by the requirements of survival. In short, illegalism would become a theoretical framework for erecting illegality as a system, a life value.

Some people push it even further, to the point of censuring a no-better-defined “illegalism at all costs,” yearning for comrades who would violate the law even when they could do otherwise simply to savor the thrill of the forbidden or perhaps in order to satisfy some ideological dogma. But I ask, where have these comrades run across this illegalism at all costs, who has spoken of it? Who would be such a fool as to challenge the severity of the law when she could do otherwise? Obviously, nobody.

But there is probably another point on which it would be useful to reflect. Can an anarchist avoid challenging the law? Certainly in many circumstances this is possible. For example, at the moment I am writing for a paper that is published legally; does this perhaps make me a legalist anarchist? On the other hand, if I were to go this evening to put up clandestine flyers, would this make me an illegalist anarchist? But then, what would ever distinguish these two categories of anarchists?

The question of the relationship between an anarchist and the law cannot be settled in such a hasty and misleading way. As I see it, the actions of an anarchist cannot be conditioned by the law in ei-

ther the positive or the negative. I mean that it cannot be either the reverential respect for the guiding standards of the time or the pleasure of transgression as an end in itself that drives her, but rather his ideas and dreams united to her individual inclinations. In other words, an anarchist can only be an alegalist, an individual who proposes to do what most pleases him beyond the law, without basing herself on what the penal code allows or forbids.

Of course, the law exists and one cannot pretend not to see it. I am quite aware that there is always a bludgeon ready to attend to our desires along the way toward their realization, but this threat should not influence our decision about the means to realize that which is dearest to our hearts. If I consider it important to publish a paper—a thing that is considered legal—I can easily attempt to follow the provisions of the law about the press in order to avoid useless annoyance, since this does not change the contents of what I intend to communicate at all.

But, on the other hand, if I consider it important to carry out an action considered illegal—like the attack against the structures and people of power—I will not change my mind simply because someone waves before my eyes the red flag of the risks I will face. If I acted otherwise, the penal code would be advising me about what my conduct

should be, greatly limiting my possibilities to act and thus to express myself.

But if it is an absurdity to describe an anarchist as “illegalist,” it would be ridiculous to attribute the quality of “legalist” to her. How could an anarchist, an individual who desires a world without authority, expect to be able to realize his dream without ever breaking the law, which is the most immediate expression of authority—that is to say, without transgressing those norms that have been deliberately established and written in order to defend the social order? Anyone who intends to radically transform this world necessarily has to place herself sooner or later against the law that aims to conserve it.

Unless... Unless the desire to change that world that still smolders in the hearts of these anarchists is in some way subordinated to the worries about the risks they might face: about being persecuted by the police, about being brought under investigation, about losing the appreciation of friends and relations. Unless the absolute freedom that means so much to anarchists is considered a great and beautiful thing mainly in the realm of theory—manifesting itself in the inoffensive banter exchanged from armchairs after a suffocating day of work—because from the practical point of view the strength of domination affords no hope.

Then it is advisable to make utopia into something concrete, with its feet upon the ground, uniting it with good sense, because revolution could never be considered legal under any penal code.

Enough of dreaming the impossible; let's try to obtain the tolerable. Here it is, the invective against the myth of illegalism coming from certain anarchists takes on a precise meaning, that of justifying their self-interested predisposition to conform to the dictates of the law, setting aside every foolish, immoderate aspiration.

In the name of realism, of course.

## THE RUDIMENTS OF TERROR

The ruling order and its challenger face each other. The former has everything: an organization—the state—economic power, military power, control over the entire nation. The latter has little at its disposal. Only a specific number of people, full of desperation, with a few rudimentary weapons. But these few are inspired by a terrible propulsive force, the ambition for domination, which is great enough to move them to launch their challenge. They know that they are weaker than their adversary, so they must strike and run, strike and run. And when a power—even in embryo—must strike, it knows only one tool: terrorism, the use of intentionally blind and indiscriminate violence. Like that of December 3, 1996 in Paris which caused the death of two people and the wounding of fifty more, mangled by the explosion of a bomb that happened in a subway car.

Terrorism has returned—the mass media throughout the world has begun to scream it. It has returned? But when did it ever go away?

Of course, the terrorism of the challenging power is blatant and is immediately denounced as such by the media of its rival. But who will have the boldness to denounce the terrorism of the power in office, the terrorism of the state, particularly the

powerful states that maintain the global order? The images of mangled bodies have traveled around the globe, rousing the horror of all, perhaps enough to make people forget that for those in power (and for those seeking it) the “common people” have always been thought of as cannon-fodder. Slaughtering them in a subway car or on a battlefield doesn’t really make any difference.

These deaths and injuries are just like the deaths and injuries caused by aerial bombing, like those occurring year-round at workplaces, in barracks, in police stations, in hospitals, in prisons. Like those brought about by the paving over of wild places, by nuclear power plants, by the adulteration of our food, by atmospheric pollution, or by the psychosomatic illnesses caused by the way of life that is imposed on us in this world.

So here it is, the violence that strikes everyone in a blind and indiscriminate fashion. Here it is, the terrorism of the state.



## POOR HEROES

*His death unleashed a frantic propaganda about the hero Durruti. Any discussion would end with the citation of his name. And each time he was named, a bit of his thought and work was killed.*

—Abel Paz,

*Buenaventura Durutti*

Durutti is probably the best known anarchist in the world. His name is linked to the Spanish revolution, to the summer of 1936, when the Iberian proletariat rose up, arms in hand, against power and attacked the military bases, burned the churches, occupied the factories. It is this struggle, where he fought on the front lines together with the people of his column, that every one remembers. This is the struggle in which he lost his life on the morning of November 20, 1936, and due to which he became a hero to all.

And a hero is always right. No one ever dares to bring his statements or his actions into question. No one. The dark sides of heroes need never be put on display; they are justified. And Durutti had his dark sides as every human being does. Of those linked to his character, such as his hatred for homosexuals, there is nothing more to say. Everyone is made as they are, and besides so much water has passed un-

der the bridge since then. But what of those linked to his choices in life? What can be said about these? What, for example, can be said about his past as a bank robber? Something needs to be said about it today when there are anarchists in prison accused of robbing banks. Can one sing the praises of that distant anarchist robber, dedicate a fine commemorative book to him and keep silent about the anarchist robbers of our time? A response to this is necessary; the comparison is far too obvious. And, as usual, the response is found in his time, in his implacable raids, in his ability to “objectively” change contexts and situations. And then there is the man, Buenaventura Durutti. Wasn’t he, in fact, the one who said—and the word of a hero is sacred—that “then I followed that method because the circumstances were different from those of the present day,” and “Banditry, no. Collective expropriation, yes! Yesterday is surpassed by the road of history itself. And anyone who desires to revive it, taking refuge in ‘the right to live’ is free to do so, but outside of our ranks, renouncing the title of militant and accepting individual responsibility for his action without compromising the life of the movement or its prestige before the working class”? Yes, he really was the one who said this, and we all need to remember it. All of us.

Only in this way could one forget. Forget that these words were said in 1933, when there were,

to quote Durutti again, “a million union members” and “a population awaiting the propitious moment to carry out the great revolution.” Forget that—after the moment when he urged collective action had passed—it would be the time for Sabate, Face-rias, and other anarchist proponents of individual action (who were maligned and disowned for this by other anarchists afraid that their organization might lose its good reputation) to take this struggle up again.

But today, are we in a moment propitious for revolution? And besides, don’t Durutti’s thoughts exclusively deal with members of the FAI/CNT? Wasn’t it the militants of these organizations who were to renounce their “titles” if they decided to attack a bank? And what of those who have never been part of such organizations, who have always strongly affirmed individual responsibility for their actions? Has Durutti’s meaning been erased in order to use his words against these people? Those who have something to say are only his self-interested interpreters, preoccupied with confirming for the millionth time that there is no salvation outside the church.

Poor Durutti. His name—when not used to christen an after-work bar for comrades—is reduced to a mere polemical tool.

## THE PRICE OF AN ENTIRE WORLD

**Massimo Passamani**

Every day, this society of hierarchy and money produces both violence and, at the same time, a fixed system of moral anesthesia that supports it. The capacity to perceive it has become an endeavor as well as necessary condition of rebellion. Daily relations are a huge, complex game of disguising the brutality.

The first rule is to fragment the activities of individuals in such a way that it is impossible to perceive them in their unity. What would the worker think if he had the totality of causes and effects of his small repetitive gestures before his eyes all at once? The machines that she operates produce exploitation, poverty, pain, death. But only with an effort can one link the starving children in Africa that one saw on television with the raw materials that one uses and the products that one manufactures. Remaining focused on tiny push-buttons anaesthetizes awareness. The little bureaucrat who fills out forms for eight hours a day does not see the immigrant that he will deport when he is at home, because her name on that form is not there. He doesn't see who will end up in prison because she didn't agree with stamped papers. He has never

locked the prison door on anyone, not him.

Passive contemplation toward a work activity that one goes through in complete unawareness is the same as that which chains one to the screen. The television viewer comes directly out of the factory or the office. She complains about her job just as he complains about the politician on TV. But if, while the latter spoke, one could see the people crushed by laws, killed by asbestos, bombed, mangled by barbed wire, and tortured in any police station, if one could collect the blood, the suffering behind the politician's trashy smile, what would happen?

The only violence that is perceived is that which is reported. The mafia kills for money. The citizen is indignant, and the more indignant she is, the more innocent she feels when she uses money (the great mafia). The terrorist puts bombs on trains. The citizen is indignant, and the more indignant he is the more he feels at home when he goes to vote (for the great terrorists). So many people who earn money every day, take it to the bank and make their purchase at the supermarket, never hold a weapon, or make a threat, or are wounded, or killed. They work in insurance, at the post office, at the custom-house or wherever; they are peaceful and love neither blood nor bullying. Clever people. They have never wanted to see violence, therefore they have never seen it.

The economy, in its abstractness, appears to move by itself. This is why money seems harmless. One doesn't see the violence among banknotes, thus it is not there. But one tries to reach out and grasp a product without giving its corresponding exchange value, its socially established value, its general equivalent—in short, money—in return. Suddenly, here is society recovering its calm from its pieces in the face of violated property. The capitalist, the judge, the police, the jailer, the journalist, the priest, and the psychologist will come to its defense. They will tell you that the value of a thing is not your enjoyment, your activity, or your need, but rather a mysterious social measure that grants a product to you only if you also accept its long train of flatterers, only if you accept the capitalist, the judge, etc. They will come to teach you the value of work and the habit of seeing in things the time that must be stolen from you in order to have them—that is the money—and thus of making things sacred, of serving them, of measuring your value in relation to them and not the other way around. They will come to remind you that the respect for property is love for the human person, that if you think otherwise, you have mental or family problems, that maybe you are seeking the affection of your parents in theft, however you may have been helped, raised, educated, connected.

They will come to try you, to imprison you. Or if you defend yourself, they will come to beat you, shoot you, kill you. Whenever anyone disrupts the habitual circulation of money, it is here, beneath the simulation, that the true face of the market appears: violence. "Stealing, robbing, how is it possible?" the citizen thinks, focused on her tiny push-button, on his files, or on the television screen in front of him. Why illegal activity instead of work? Perhaps because by stretching out one's hand directly for money, one snatches time—life—from the organization of the economy. One takes the possibility for doing as one pleases, for dreaming, for discussing, for loving, for creating one's projects from the dead time of work. Less time for work, more time for destroying it. Money is time. One certainly does not escape exploitation and the commodity system by attacking property (to think this is once again to focus on one's own pointing finger, thus, yet another ethical anaesthetic). What one obtains, having the strength for it, is a few additional possibilities. When things are no longer measured with the yardstick of money (that is, of the extorted activity of sacrifice), they lend themselves better to experimentation, to the gift, to use, to destruction. Work no longer appears only as the wage (the first of its chains), but as social organization, as an ensemble of relationships. Escaping the wage sys-

tem—in the narrow sense—provides one with an additional tool (provided that one does not allow oneself to be enslaved by the money, by the *role* of robber, by specialization) in the struggle against the economy. But this struggle is either widespread or it is nothing. Only when looting becomes an extensive practice, when the gift arms itself against exchange value, when relationships are no longer mediated by commodities and individuals give *their own* value to things, only then does the destruction of the market and of money—which is all one with the demolition of the state and of every hierarchy—become a real possibility.

But when the authorities catch a glimpse of all these aspirations behind a robbery, they raise the price. If those who commit the robbery are anarchist individuals, the price rises to the risk of shooting or being killed, to the risk of losing the time one wanted to snatch from work in prison, to all the additional time the magistrates have planned for them plus the additional charge of “armed band.” The punishment increases. There is a theorem prepared for any comrade who individually decides to solve his money problem by committing a robbery, that would lock him up, even before he is put in jail, in a secret structure with leaders, treasurers, and bookkeepers. Thus, the state presents an increasingly spiced-up account and tries to create



an odious collective responsibility in order to turn us into the controllers of each other. Once again, illegal violence is reported to cover up the daily, legal violence. Where an anarchist is involved, the train of the flatterers of money is even longer. The wares are even more costly, because what is in question is the very existence of capitalists, judges, police, jailers, journalists, priests, psychologists, bureaucrats, workers, and robbers.

The surplus of repression is defending a whole world of prices. No price should seem too high.

*The next four texts were printed in Canenero in order to stimulate an ongoing discussion. Unfortunately, this discussion never went beyond what is printed here and a few very brief statements that merely amounted to taking sides rather than furthering the debate. Although I am quite aware that the specific detail of the situation in Italy in 1996-7 were quite different from that of the U.S. in 2014, I nonetheless think that there are broader ideas presented in these texts that are worthy of discussion and debate in relationship to a real practice here as well. I hope that there are those who will be moved to further this discussion in terms of our situation here and now.*

*—the translator*

## **COMMUNIQUE FROM PRISON**

On the day that the state-capital in its two-fold capacity of judge-oppressor officiates its vindictory trial (in the Occorsio hall of the court in Rome on December 10, 1996) against the anarchist movement—an archaic rite of insult and criminalization against the transgressors of bourgeois society—in an attempt to expunge every form of individual or organized revolutionary antagonism combating the exploitation of the human being, we fearlessly affirm combatant revolutionary action, without unrealistic aphorisms or anathemas we will claim our identity

as an armed organization against the state.

In that hall-like place, a formal representation of the legitimacy of bourgeois law, we will practice militant anarchist anti-judicialism by abstaining from the farce of the trial. We will not endorse the mythical “de jure” judicial doctrine: age-old normative heritage of states developed on the age-old usurpations of slavery, torture, and the exploitation of other people’s labor, guaranteeing defense for those investigated, offering them the judicial tool of reply, a way of enforcing the “democratic” form of the prosecuting trial, a sharp, corrupt, and deceptive way to disguise *a priori* the prejudice against the defendants who don’t appear in court. We will not recognize the judges!

Industrial civilization is the highest aspiration of progress to which state-capital society aims. It forces millions of people in the world to give up ancient indigenous cultures in order to embrace the modern culture of the factory. With the tremendous means of the bourgeois capitalist state—even beyond functioning as the dominant means of production—are powerful organizers of culture, the culture summed up in the symbols of the commodity as mediations between production and consumption.

The globalization of exploitation now so extremely normal is intellectual. The cerebral flat-

tening to the preordained schemas of intelligent machines, the homogenization of the cultures of peoples to the new languages of communications and production, are the aim of the new imperialist colonialism. Cybernetic universalism, or multimedia communication, is a tool of the systematic and quantitative reorganization of the new world order, in the sectors of the market, of capital, of the institutional order, and of the territorial infrastructure, of the repression of antagonists, refractory to the homogenization of the new scientism, intellectual standardizer.

Inspiring ourselves critically with the experiences of the antagonist armed movement of the 1970s and particularly with the anarchist heritage, with struggles for regional independence—stable references for our path of conflict with the state-capital, aimed at extinguishing them through insurrectional means—therefore, on the basis of this historical heritage, we allude to constructing a communist society in anarchist production in the anti-legal sense, without courts or prisons, through struggle against every form of government and power that is realized through the exploited; an iconoclastic society inspired by free cooperation among people and by free education.

We recognize in this court the fawning role of the servant of the state, in which, living like a

courtier off the sweat of the production of workers and peasants, it insures that the exploited populace continues its obsequious service to bourgeois justice.

Every revolutionary action against the state and bourgeois institutions will be claimed as the sign of a beginning and a continuation of a precise antagonistic path, called Combatant Revolutionary Action, for which we will assume all responsibility in front of power.

No claim at all—at least on our part—for actions against the state with the circle A, because this exposes the anarchist movement to continuous provocations, while it is right to form specific groups that assume political responsibility for their actions.

Our combatant path is the formation in the revolutionary sense of a combatant, internationalist, anti-imperialist anarchist organization, in relation with all revolutionary forces that intend to subvert the order of the bourgeois capitalist state in its phase of globalization, in order to introduce ourselves as a unique productive and organizational model for relations between human beings.

To the many-centered and camouflaged conformation of cybernetic-industrial power, we will respond with wide-spread and well-aimed actions to undermine it in both the territory and the urban

space where the organizational and informational infrastructures of its domination are centered.

Living force to all revolutionary prisoners and to all combatants, for a new free, anarchist, and communist anti-authoritarian society.

Remember to avenge all the comrades struck by the fire of the repression of the state-capital.

Long live anarchy, long live armed struggle.

*Rome, December 1, 1996*

*Pippo Stasi, Karechin Cricorian  
(Garagin Gregorian)*

## THE FULLNESS OF A STRUGGLE WITHOUT ADJECTIVES

Recently a communiqué from prison was distributed that has probably disturbed quite a few comrades. We are reproducing it here. Though it has the tone of a proclamation and certain statements are ambiguous, it seems to us that we can rule out the idea that we are faced with the announcement of the formation of an anarchist armed organization. This would be illogical for various reasons. For example, because, throughout time, armed groups have been shrewd enough to explain themselves after they have acted, and it doesn't appear to us as if the acronym "Combatant Revolutionary Action" has ever claimed anything. Furthermore, if the comrades who signed the communiqué had, indeed, formed an armed organization, their document would become an explicit self-denunciation before the court, and this even before having initiated hostilities. If such a thing were true, it would make no sense at all.

From this, we deduce that the text should be interpreted as a simple proposal. Unfortunately, the wretched linguistic style in which it was formulated risks provoking misunderstandings and incomprehension that it would be best for everyone to avoid. More simply, we believe that Pippo Stasi

and Garagin Gregorian wish to invite the anarchist movement to reflect on the arguments that they set forth, like the necessity for a portion of anarchists to undertake a path of armed struggle and, therefore to create a specific armed struggle. And since these comrades have not hesitated to state what they think, assuming all responsibility, we assume that no one will take it badly if we do the same.

As we have often taken the opportunity to say in the columns of this paper, we are decidedly opposed to all armed organization, including an unlikely anarchist armed organization. Here it is not a question of a mere divergence of views, but of a substantial radical difference that goes well beyond any considerations of expediency or contingency. We are today against any armed organization, as we were yesterday and will be tomorrow. And we confirm that this aversion of ours is not limited to formal disagreement. Not only will we never support an armed organization, but we will oppose it with harsh critique. We will oppose its formation and spread because we consider it hostile to us, insofar as it is not capable of generating prospects that we find desirable.

We think that the individual who rises up, the individual who rebels against this world that is too cramped to contain his dreams, has no interest in limiting their possibilities, but in extending them



infinitely if possible. Thirsty for freedom, eager for experience, anyone who rebels is in continuous search for new affinities, for new tools with which to express herself, with which to go to the attack on the existent in order to subvert it from the foundations. This is why insurrectional struggle should find its stimulus and energy in our capacity for filling its arsenal with ever-new weapons, beyond and against all reductive specialization. The experts in pistols are like the experts in books, or occupations, or whatever else. They are boring because they always and only speak about themselves and their favorite means. Precisely because we do not privilege one tool over any of the others, we love and support numberless actions, carried out through the most varied means, that occur daily against the ruling order and its structures. Because revolt is like poetry: to be such it must be made by all, not by one alone, particularly not an expert.

Now the specific armed organization is the negation of this insurrectionary struggle, the parasite poisoning the blood. Whereas insurrection encourages enjoyment and the realization of what we have at heart, armed organization only promises sacrifice and ideology. Whereas insurrection exalts the possibilities of individuals, armed organization only exalts the techniques of its soldiers. Whereas insurrection considers a gun or a stick of dyna-

mite only one of the weapons available to it, the armed organization makes them the only weapons, the only tools to use (“Long live armed struggle”). Whereas insurrection aims to generalize itself and invites everyone to participate in its festival, the armed organization is closed by force of circumstance and—except for its few militants—nothing is left for others to do except to cheer it on. The subversion of life is a vast project that knows no limits, because it aims to disrupt the totality of society. Armed organization is only able to glimpse a marginal aspect of this struggle—the military conflict against the state—and mistakes it for the whole. And even this conflict, even the armed attack against the state, loses any liberatory meaning, any breath of life, when its entire impetus is reduced to the promotion of a program as an acronym to spend at the political market.

It is rather in anonymity that all political calculation vanishes, leaving space for the thousands of individual tensions and vibrations, and for the possibility for them to meet, come together, and abandon themselves in each other. And of what use are neon signs to those with no commodities to sell. As to the accusation against those actions claimed with a “circle A”—the claim that they expose the whole anarchist movement to police provocation—some anarchists are terrorized by the

idea that someone might come knocking at their door. Unfortunately for them and for the comrades who signed the document, a possible acronym will certainly not resolve the situation. At most, instead of suspecting anarchists of having signed an action with a “circle A” the police will suspect them of being part of a specific group.

It seems to us a bit hasty to claim that in the 1970s, the anarchist movement knew specific experiences of the combatant model, since the “Revolutionary Action” (AR) archipelago—to which we assume Stasi and Gregorian are referring—can only be described as “anarchist” at the cost of a huge ideological distortion. In fact, comrades of various origins came together in AR, which was animated at the beginning by a libertarian and anti-stalinist spirit that defined its experiment for a brief time as anarcho-communist (considered as the summation of the various positions of the comrades). But it has become clear to many anarchists that armed organizations, none of them excluded, contributed to the decline of social subversion in those years. And these critical reflections are not new, but have been expressed by various anarchists on many occasions since the 1970s.

We don’t know what pushed Stasi and Gregorian to distribute this writing. To say it clearly, their proposal seems out of this world to us, a bit like

rhetoric coming directly from debates that raged in the 1970s, poisoning the atmosphere. But more than anything else, we don't like to see comrades accept the ultimatum that power puts forth today (either reformism or armed struggle), allowing themselves to get drawn into the foolish game of upping the ante: since we are accused of belonging to an armed band that doesn't exist, why not form a real one? Well, this temptation, this attraction toward the one-way mirror of the armed organization, has no grip on us, and we will never tire of criticizing it wherever it manifests itself. Insurrection has desires and reasons that no military logic could ever understand.

## A MISSING DEBATE

Three weeks ago, when we published Garagin Gregorian and Pippo Stasi's communiqué from prison, we thought that it might open an interesting and worthwhile discussion. That document could have generated an endless series of reflection on topics that are always relevant (specialization, specific armed organization, attack, justice) and on others that—having never really disappeared—after many years are present again to shake up our lives (the question of going on the lam, for example). In our opinion, all these topics should be faced in perspective. By this we mean that they should be confronted not just on the basis of the much-too-obvious logic of "*comrades are grown-up, weaned, and choose what to do for themselves.*" We've all reached this point, and it seems ridiculous to repeat it. It is not so necessary to say which conception seems to us to be more or less compatible with "anarchist ethics and tradition," but rather which one seems like it could move in our perspective. An armed band could possibly be organized in a horizontal manner, but what does that have to do with our insurrection? In the article that accompanied the comrades' communiqué, we did nothing more than reassert the basic banalities on the question of armed struggle, the important matters that *Canen-*

*ero* has always been fond of emphasizing. But so many other questions remain open: questions that need to be raised sooner or later.

An example for all: the police knock at our door with an arrest warrant. In the situation where we manage to give them the slip, what do we do? Take care, this is a serious problem because forced clandestinity should not cause the interruption of our projects. We should make ourselves capable of facing the new situation in a way that allows us to still attack the ruling order, and to continue to live fully and with passion in all the spaces that, despite everything, we are able to conquer. To do this, clear ideas and useable tools would be of service to us—before the arrest warrants—to make sure that our life is not reduced to merely flight. These tools are also the new way for organizing with respect to the new situation, the new way of communicating with struggles-in-course and with comrades who are not being pursued. Everything with the same perspective of the complete overturning of life, sacrifice, and the existent that animated us before we had to go on the lam. And what about this, what could it ever have to do with a specific combatant organization—even one that is horizontal, but still has acronyms, programs, and the limits that follow from this?

In any case, we were wrong. The debate had a hard time getting off the ground and only one

contribution to the discussion has reached us up to now [...]. All the rest have been collective communiqués and the taking of stands [...] that don't deal with the topics in question with sufficient depth. On the contrary, it seems to us that they reveal, at least partially, some common flaws and push us to consider a few things. The first is that it is necessary to know how to read. By this we mean that if someone writes that the specific armed organization, even when it declares itself anarchist, is a structure that we consider our enemy—as we wrote in the last issue—because its prospects are utterly opposed to those we hope for, one should not read that those who propose it or practice it are our enemies. If we were to state that the anarcho-syndicalist perspective, for example, is not just extraneous, but also hostile, to us, we are certain that no one would misunderstand our words. No one would think that we intended to wait outside the houses of comrades who share this perspective in order to do them in, or that we would refuse to give our solidarity if they were struck by repression. The thing that touches us is that in their vision there is a place ready for us as well, that we, however, do not want to occupy. And our critique originates from their project of enclosing us in that place and our firm intention not to be enclosed. And these two perspectives, ours and theirs, have

everything to gain from a mutual, constant, and heated critique, one that is even harsh when necessary. Because only through critique can distances widen or be bridged and the method be found for making a worthwhile clash of projects that are so different as to be hostile.

Knowing how to read also means that when someone writes that an experience like Revolutionary Action (AR) can be described as anarchist only at the cost of a huge distortion, one should not read that there were no anarchists in the AR. There were many, but there were also many other respectable comrades who, and this is not our fault, were not anarchists. It is not without reason that we consider the debate about the AR more interesting than that about the Red Brigades or other combatant parties.

And then—to bring up another flaw—if the one who proposes certain perspectives has the misfortune of being in prison, we certainly cannot play the role of Red Cross nurses, accepting anything that comes to us from behind bars with a compliant smile or applause even when we consider it rubbish. As long as we consider comrades in prison as poor things whom we must always consider right so as not to hurt them, or as heroes who we consider right because prisoners are always right, the problem will be left unresolved, new situations will



catch us unprepared yet again and—in turn—the comrades in prison will be left more and more isolated. It would be best to shake the myths of guerilla war or political medals from our heads—the myths according to which the more time one has been or has to be in prison, the more revolutionary and, thus, the more correct they must be—and reason passionately on our problems, which are also the problems of the imprisoned who have their say as well. This is why *Canenero* dedicates these pages to this topic [...]

Finally, one more thing shines through in some of the statements of position: the concern that *Canenero* should or wants to be the representative paper of “an area.” *Canenero* represents a small piece of the lives of those who publish it. So don’t think ill of us if we don’t consult all (all of whom? which area?) before saying what we think about what comes to us, or if we are not so many experts of the doctrine, since we want nothing to do with doctrines.

—*the editors of Canenero*

## LETTER ON SPECIALIZATION

*(Not putting one's destiny into play unless one is willing to play with all of one's possibilities)*

Today I thought about how sad it is to fall into the habit of defining ourselves in terms of one of the many activities in which we realize ourselves, as if that activity alone described the totality of our existence. This much too closely resembles the separations inflicted on our lives by the state and the economy. Take work, for example. The reproduction of the conditions of existence (i.e., the effort put out in order to eat, sleep, stay warm, etc.) should be completely integrated with discussion, play, the continuous transformation of the environment, loving relationships, conflict, in short with the thousands of expressions of our uniqueness. Instead, work has not only become the center of every concern, but—confident in its independence—it also imposes its measure on free time, amusement, encounters, and reflection. In short, it presents as the measure of life itself. In fact, since this is their social identity, almost everyone is defined in terms of the job they carry out, i.e., in terms of misery.

I am referring particularly to how the theory and practice of subversives is effected by the fragmentation imposed on everyone's lives by power.

For example, take arms. It seems obvious to me that a revolution without arms is impossible, but it is equally clear that arms are not enough. Indeed, I believe that the more revolutionary a change is, the less armed conflict is its measure. The broader, more conscious, and more joyous the transformation is, the greater is the condition of no return, created in relationship to the past. If subversion is carried into every sphere of existence, the armed defense of one's possibility for destroying becomes completely one with the creation of new relationships and new environments. Then, everyone would be armed. Otherwise, specialists come into being—future bosses and bureaucrats—who “defend” while everyone else demolishes and rebuilds... their own slavery.

This is especially important because it is not “military” defeats that set off the decline and the consequent triumph of the old world, but rather the dying away of autonomous action and enthusiasm that are smothered by the lie of the “harsh necessities of the transition” (sacrifice before happiness in communism, obedience to power before freedom in anarchy). And historically, the most brutal repression is always played out precisely in this decline, never in the moment of widespread and uncontainable insurrection. Paradoxically, anarchists should push, arm in hand, so that arms

are needed as little as possible and so that they are never separated from the totality of revolt. Then I ask myself what “armed struggle” could ever mean. I understand it when a leninist is speaking about it, since he possesses nothing of revolution except the misery he sets up—the coup d’etat, the taking of the Winter Palace. But for an anti-authoritarian? Perhaps, in the face of the general refusal to attack the state and capital, it could have the significance of emphasizing the inoffensiveness of every partial opposition and the illusoriness of a liberation that tries to abolish the ruling order simply by “delegitimizing it,” or self-managing ones elsewhere. It could be. But if there is anything partial, it is precisely the guerrilla mythology, with its entire stock of slogans, ideologies, and hierarchical separations. So one is harmless to power when one accepts going down the paths known to power and, thus, helps to impede all those paths power does not know. As to illusions, what else can one call the thesis according to which daily life—with its roles, duties, and passivity—is criticized through armed organization. I absolutely recall the thesis: the endeavor was to supply a libertarian and non-vanguardist alternative to the stalinist combatant organizations. The results were already written in the methods. As if to attack the state and capital, there would be need for acronyms, boring claims, unreadable communiqués, and

all the rest. And still we hear talk of “armed struggle” and “combatant” organizations. It can only be positive to remember—in the midst of so much self-interested amnesia—that arms also make up a part of the struggle. But what does this mean? That we should no longer publish journals, have debates, publicly call for the elimination of the pope, throw eggs at judges or yogurt at journalists, loot during marches, occupy spaces, or blockade the editorial office of whatever newspaper? Or does it mean—exactly as some magistrates dream—that this “level” should be left to some so that others can become specialists of the “attack”? Furthermore, with the intention of sparing the useless involvement of the entire movement for the actions of a few, as if it were not such separations that have always prepared the best terrain for repression.

It would be necessary to free the practices of attack from any “combatant” phraseology, in order to cause them to become the real coming together of all revolts. This is the best way to prevent them from falling into a rut. So much more so, since the exploited themselves sometimes move to the attack without waiting for instruction from any organization whatsoever. Dissatisfaction arms itself against the terrorist spectacle of power, sometimes feeding the spectacle. And anarchists should not be the ones to disarm it. In order to hide every sign of dissatis-

faction, in order to show that no one—except the latest “terrorists”—rebels against democracy, the state tries to invent a clandestine anarchist organization to which it attributes thousands of expressions of revolt—a revolt that goes beyond any gang, armed or not—in order to negate these expressions. This way, it manages silence and social consensus. Precisely because the masters would like to enclose our activities into a military structure, dividing them into different “levels,” it is necessary for us to expand and unite them as much as possible into a revolutionary project that surpasses through excess the armed mythology. Each one with her own aptitudes and desires. And more than this, carrying subversion into every sphere of existence. The weapon that contains all weapons is the will to live with all one’s possibilities, immediately.

And what of the thesis according to which it is necessary to take responsibility in the face of power by claiming one’s actions? It seems clear to me that the police are made happy by acronyms ready for sticking on inconvenient individuals. So if responsibility is not to be a lie or a pretext for control, it must be individual. Each person is responsible to herself in her actions. The mutual recognition of responsibility only happens on a plane of mutuality. Therefore, there is no responsibility in the face of those who, by exploiting, place themselves against

all mutuality. In the face of authority, there is no terrain—political or military conflict—of common recognition, but only hostility. What does it mean, then, to take one's responsibility in the face of power? Could it maybe mean—in perfect leninist observance—being recognized by it as an organization? Here responsibility ends and its collective substitute, the spectacle of social war, begins.

The leftist democrat, respectful of the law, is the first one to become infatuated with guerrilla iconography (especially when it is exotic); and the guerrilla, once he has laid down his arms, is the first one to return, gradually from the left, to law and democracy. From this point of view, the one who declares the insurrectional perspective closed in its entire range, adhering more or less directly to reformism, helps to reinforce the false need for combatant organizations—reversed projections of political impotence. Leftist militants are even able to use subcommandante Marcos to legitimate their role against right through the game of postponements. For his part, the subcommandante hopes for nothing more than to be able to act democratically for his fatherland.

Leaving behind the more or less modernized leninists, we come to the sphere of anarchists. Even here, among the specialists of debate, many clasped the “Chiapas insurgents” to their hearts, provided

that insurrection—this infantile disorder of anarchism—is never talked about from our side... And as long as one takes due distance from those who continue to talk about it.

Once at the very end of a meeting on self-managed spaces, a friend of mine told me that in the 1970s there was the firm belief that anyone who used a gun, for this reason alone, was right; while now it seems that reason has been transferred lock, stock, and barrel to those who occupy spaces. Interchangeable specializations. In itself, occupying spaces is an important method of struggle, containing the very possibility of all subversion in a nutshell: the determination to reach out a hand and take one's space. This clearly doesn't mean that such a method, by itself, could put an end to the world of constraints and commodities. As always, the ideas and desires of those who apply it make the difference. If anyone in the occupied spaces seeks the guarantee of survival in a slapdash way, she will find it there, just as—by putting the occupation itself into play—she could find the point of departure for his most boundless demands there. The same goes for books, explosives or love affairs. The most important thing is not to place limits—in one direction or the other—borrowed from the ruling criteria (law, the number, the fortune of success).



Personally, I don't know "the insurrectionalists;" I only know individuals who support the necessity of insurrection, each with his own reasons or methods. A necessity, as one of our friends said, determined by the fact that within the present society it is only possible to propose different ways of responding to the existing questions (perhaps with direct democracy, citizens' committees, etc.), whereas with insurrection the questions themselves change.

And if we refuse all specialization, why describe ourselves as "squatters"? Why describe ourselves through one practice alone? Is it maybe because we can speak publicly of this practice, because it can spread further than others and because it implies a collective dimension? Poor criteria, in my opinion. One can also speak publicly of sabotage, as long as there isn't any need to say "I did this" or "that guy did the other thing," in order to discuss a question. Several people could also carry out an act of sabotage together, but even when only one person puts it into practice, this does not make the action lose its meaning. It seems to me that the question of the capacity for spreading in itself should be a *reason for reflection*, certainly not a *unit of measure*. If someone who loves breaking the windows of banks or shopping centers were to say to you, "Hi, I am a vandal," it would make

you laugh. It would be equally ridiculous if a subversive described himself as a “writer” because he doesn’t disdain publishing some book or article. I have never heard any anarchist present herself as a “saboteur.” If I ever heard this, I would think I was meeting a cretin. Furthermore, who has ever critiqued occupation as such? Who has ever said that dynamite is “more revolutionary” than crowbars? Making the struggle in all its form into an indivisible totality—this is the point. I would say this not of the struggle, but of my life. Without “propaganda” and “the arms of critique,” “armed struggle” and “the critique of arms,” “daily life” and “revolution,” “individual” and “organization,” “self-management” and “direct action,” and away with pigeonholing.

But without specific proposals (labor struggle, the occupation of spaces or something else), how do you create a broader involvement? Proposals are possible, even though it is necessary to agree on what and with whom. But such proposals are either instances of a theoretical critique and a global practice, or they are... accepted proposals.

Nonetheless, not everything is to be destroyed. The possibility of destruction must not be destroyed. This is not wordplay. Destruction is thought, desired, projected, and organized. To do this, no useful contribution, whether theoretical or practical, is wasted, no method abandoned. It is certainly not with fine

proclamations of subversion that we can go to the assault on the world. This way, one only becomes a retiree of revolt. The possibility of destruction is completely to be invented, and no one can say that that there has been much effort put into doing this. Often with the alibi that he doesn't want to construct anything, someone will go deeply into reasonings, and equally often, she lacks the will to be as open-minded and quick as her ideas, to refuse to remain at the mercy of events. In short, the ability to know how to choose the occasion. "In the heart of the occasion, everything is a weapon for the man whose will is not disarmed."

I say again: everything together or nothing. When one claims to subvert the world only with discussion, or occupations, or books, or arms, one ends up trying to direct assemblies, occupying hovels, writing badly and shooting worse. The fact is that by repeating these banalities that should be the foundation for starting to truly discuss, one becomes boring like the specialists of repetition. The worn-out dialogues change by changing the situation.

*Massimo Passamani*

## AN ADVENTURE WITHOUT REGRETS

Dear readers,

What you have in your hands is the last issue of *Canenero*. Various reasons have moved us to decide to bring it to a close. They all refer back to what we said in the editorial of #33, the first in the new series: “*Canenero* is a wager that only has meaning if there is someone willing to play.” And now, those who have been willing to gamble on this stake are no longer so.

We are no longer available to do *Canenero* because its publication has come to take up too much of our lives, preventing us not only from carrying out other projects that are close to our hearts, but also from being able to fully utilize the very instrument to which we gave life. If an anarchist weekly doesn’t want to have the aim of merely being an account, it must necessarily be used, and paradoxically those who made this one didn’t have the opportunity to use it as we would have liked.

Besides, the limited length for articles in this kind of weekly (the famous page and a half) very often—at most—allowed us to outline certain discussions, only to leave them unresolved. Since it is unlikely that the subsequent deepening of the discussion could happen in a weekly of this sort, it

could only have served if the topics were revisited in other more suitable venues, which up to now nobody has created. In the end, this situation became intolerable to us, first of all because of the current absence of other tools like magazines (that would come out less frequently) or books.

Finally, we have realized that, particularly in times like these, a weekly is able to stimulate reflection and worthwhile debate only with great difficulty. Incredibly, precisely due to the decision to include confrontative questions, *Canenero* has ended up becoming an object of debate itself, instead of one of those involved in debate. To speak clearly, a weekly is alive when it is able to involve as many individuals as possible, i.e., when the ideas expressed trigger chain reactions (even violent ones if you will, provided that they occur in conditions of mutuality). Otherwise, the paper falls back on itself and the only thing left is for it to die—if it doesn't want to survive as a pathetic monument to the idea. And for this paper, this confrontation is lacking. Those who didn't agree with our ideas didn't contribute, only being able to send letters of insults and accusation, which lacked the least bit of argumentation. And those who shared our ideas—even if only partially—didn't contribute. Worse yet, we realized that the weekly had been entrusted with the task of representation: being the voice of

those who have none. And the only discussions that *Canenero* seems to have been able to raise are those relating to its ability or lack thereof to perform a task that none of us ever desired it should perform. In this regard, the position-takings that appeared in the last issue, in its “stodgy supplement,” are an example. A broad, interesting debate capable of expressing many imaginable facets and nuances was not born from the clash of two different perspectives. All that was born was a distressing series of declarations *for* or *against*. But *for* or *against* what, and why? Silence. Everyone keeps quiet.

A silence that reconfirms our doubts about the current validity of *Canenero*, and only increases the need to abandon an analytical tool like a weekly that maybe due to its overly narrow time schedule does not allow a better settling of the ideas contained in it, limiting itself inevitably to piling up problems and questions that still remain open.

And for all of these reasons, we have decided to put an end to *Canenero*.  
Without regrets.

*The editors*